

A MIXED METHODS EVALUATION OF VIRTUAL TEACHER COLLABORATION TO
ADDRESS TEACHER ATTRITION IN CHARTER SCHOOLS

by
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A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Education

Baltimore, MD

August 2018

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Abstract

Charter schools across the country experience teacher attrition rates as much as twice the teacher attrition rates of traditional public schools (Stuit & Smith, 2012). To overcome high teacher attrition rates, some schools implement structured mentoring programs and leverage professional learning communities to support new teachers' effectiveness. Teachers that have high levels of self-efficacy tend to experience high levels of job satisfaction and are more likely to remain in their teaching assignment (Burley, Hall, Villeme, & Brockmeier, 1991; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982). To support first and second-year teacher development, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and to positively influence teachers' intention to remain in their charter school teaching assignment, a North Texas tuition-free public charter school network implemented both virtual professional learning communities and virtual office hours. After eight virtual roundtable sessions, a subsample of first and second-year secondary teachers completed a survey, and a small group participated in semi-structured interviews. Survey respondents and interviewees that participated in the virtual roundtables evaluation indicated that the sessions included the sharing of instructional strategies, curriculum design opportunities, and little support with workload management. Survey respondents and interviewees opinions differed regarding what types of activities they found to be beneficial during the virtual sessions. There was no conclusive link between teacher participation in the virtual roundtables in supporting the development of their self-efficacy, improving their job satisfaction, and their intention to remain in the profession. The findings suggest that the charter network should work toward providing well-facilitated virtual sessions and develop a comprehensive program of support for early career teachers.

Keywords: teacher attrition, self-efficacy, virtual professional learning communities

Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Marc Stein



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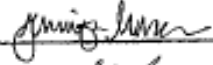

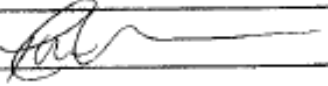
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Dedication

Thank you, God.

I dedicate this written work to my sister Shannon Warner, my brothers Dwayne Washington and Antonio Washington, and to my beloved grandmother Willie Mae Douthard. You were not physically here for this journey, but I know that your thoughts and prayers were with me every step of the way. To my mother, I hope that my journey has been one that represents the sacrifice that you made in caring for me and believing in my dreams before I even knew how to dream. And to my father, my desire of completing this dissertation before you made your transition was left unfulfilled. However, I hope that my completion of this dissertation honors your life and the belief that you and Mom instilled in me from birth that is present in the words of Rudyard Kipling that “yours is the Earth, and everything that’s in it.” I am eternally grateful for both your love and sacrifice.

Acknowledgements

I would not have been able to complete this dissertation without the support and guidance of my advisor, Dr. Marc Stein, and my dissertation committee members, Drs. Jennifer Morrison, and Eric Rice. I am appreciative of every critique and push to guide my learning and research. I am grateful for the friendships that will last for a lifetime from those members of the 2015 Ed.D Cohort. Thank you to Tiveeda Stovall for always showing me how to have a life, even with “Russian” interference throughout this program.

I have been fortunate to work with dynamic educators both in Chicago and in Dallas. My former colleague and teacher at Morgan Park High School, Mr. Gerald Moore has been here every step of the way and has read each version of this dissertation from the beginning of the program. I could not ask for a better friend and thought partner. From a far distance, my mentors, Drs. Beryl P. Shingles, Everett L. Edwards, and Gregory Hauser, whom I met while working in Chicago Public Schools have cheered me on along the way and consistently pushed me to be bold and to defy the odds at each turn. My colleagues and friends both currently and formerly working at Morgan Park High School, Althea Tucker, Adrian Burrage, Morgan Mudron, Gail Tennial, Nicole Brown, Carol McDaniel, Thomas Arrington, Edna Brown, Theresa Marshall, Deborah Carter and many others, have cheered me on over the course of the past three years. I am genuinely grateful for their support.

To my colleagues at Uplift Education, words cannot express how grateful I am that you allowed me to conduct my evaluation and to support teaching in learning in ways that are outside the scope of my day-to-day role. Yasmin Bhatia, Richard Harrison, Deborah Bigham, Kristi Erickson, Mya Baker, and Drs. Marilyn Wright and Tony Walker have all supported me without bounds to ensure that I crossed the finish line. I hope that my research brings value and is in

support of the network's vision around developing and retaining teachers. I am grateful for the network curriculum coordinators and the secondary teachers that participated in the virtual roundtables. To my colleagues that have put up with my hectic school schedule and have picked up my slack when I had to meet deadlines or travel to Baltimore, I am genuinely grateful for you. Thank you to Karen Evans, Kristina Nanini, Anne Erickson, Samina Noorani, Mauricio Dominguez, Jeffrey Kirby, Andrew Baca, Mark Forman, and Candice Dagnino, for your unwavering support, understanding, and forgiveness when I was sleep deprived and not at my best. Thanks to Erin Barksdale for constantly screaming my name in all caps via text message to ensure that I was still in the race. I want to especially thank Priscilla Collins-Parhms for encouraging me each week to stay in the race and for not allowing me to give up on getting "our doctoral degree."

I have the best family and friends in the world. Each of you has been a rock and always knew when to say a word of encouragement when I needed it the most. To Meghan who never judged me when I was cranky and who has been in my corner since the first day we met at NU; to Julie who always gives me perspective when I can't see the forest for the trees; to Tiffany who is not only my cousin but the dearest friend a person can have, and to Andrea who always tells me that I am better than I think I am, I say thank you with all of my heart. To my Uncle Harold who treats me like I am his daughter, and my uncles Jeffrey and Luther and my aunts Claudette, Annette, and Cheryl and a host of cousins, there are too many of you to name; I thank you for always being a source of love and strength. To my mentees Jirmiah Leverette and Monica Packnett, I am proud of the young women that you have become. To my brother Keith, sister-in-law Nesha, my nephews, Jalen, DeAndre, and Caleb, I love you, and I sincerely hope that you are proud of our accomplishment. Ubuntu. I am because we are.

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Executive Summary

Nationally, teachers in charter schools are twice as likely to leave their teaching assignments as their peers in the traditional public school sector (Stuit & Smith, 2012; Torres, 2016). Research on the topic of teacher attrition in charter schools suggests that charter school teachers leave their teaching assignments for the following reasons: dissatisfaction with low salaries, working conditions (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2005; 2008; DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Imazeki, 2005; Johnson & Birkland, 2003; Kuckla & Acevedo, 2009; Stuit & Smith, 2011), school leadership competence (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2009; Torres, 2014), and teacher self-efficacy (Burely, Hall, Villeme, & Brockmeir, 1991; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1992; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007).

When large numbers of teachers leave a school, it can negatively influence a school's ability to maintain an efficient and stable learning environment (Boyd, Grossman, Loeb, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2009). The exodus of teachers can result in reduced student achievement outcomes and lack of collegiality and cohesion among staff members (Boyd, Grossman, Loeb, Lankford & Wyckoff, 2008; Grissom, 2011). Charter schools must make an effort to slow teacher attrition to continue to increase student outcomes, and to be competitive in the school choice marketplace.

Purpose of The Research Study: Problem of Practice

North Texas has experienced a large amount of population growth over the last 15 years (Hanna, 2016; NTCOG, 2015). The Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington areas saw a 146,000-resident jump in 2017, which was the largest of any metropolitan area in the United States (Transwestern, 2017). The population of the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington area is 7,399,622 residents, only behind the three largest metropolitan areas of Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles

(Transwestern, 2017). In a ten-year period, the student population in North Texas has increased at similar rates to the area's population boom (Wright, Lee, & Murphy, 2017). This increase in student population has led to a competitive teacher recruitment market. However, both traditional public school districts and public charter schools in the region have both seen increasing teacher attrition rates (Texas Education Agency, 2015).

Uplift Education is a network of public, tuition-free, open-enrollment charter schools in North Texas. Uplift schools currently educate nearly 18,000 students in 40 schools (Uplift Education, n.d., para. 1). Over the past five school years, the network of schools has grown by adding two to three campuses per year. While increasing in size, Uplift has experienced some challenges retaining first and second year teachers. For more than three consecutive years the teacher attrition rate has been greater than 20% (D. Meyer, personal communication, September 2016). Uplift Education as well as other charter schools in the North Texas region are invested in finding ways to slow teacher attrition to remain competitive in a growing school choice marketplace.

Evidence of Problem: Needs Assessment Findings

Observed themes from the needs assessment conducted in Uplift Education are consistent with the research literature indicates that the amount and quality of support early career teachers receive from their colleagues can influence a teacher's perception of the schools' organizational culture and influence their perceptions of self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and their intention to return to their teaching role (Hallam et al., 2012; Spencer, Harrop, Thomas, & Cain, 2017; Tschannan-Moran et al., 2007). Studies that took under consideration various working conditions, school climate, and student composition found that new teachers' perceptions of systems of support provided by the school's leadership (e.g., direct support, teacher induction,

mentoring support) were the strongest predictors of teacher attrition (Boyd, et al., 2011; Ladd, 2011).

The stress created by a demanding organizational culture of some charter school can create the feelings of disillusionment among teachers (Stuit & Smith, 2012). As learned from participant responses in the interview portion of the needs assessment and from research literature, new teachers become overwhelmed when they do not feel as if they can meet the expectations and have difficulty managing their workload (Achinstein & Fogo, 2015; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009).

Evidence-Based Intervention

As referenced in the section above, beginning teachers often feel overwhelmed by the teaching workload and their own efficacy in meeting the organizational culture and students' needs (Bogler et al., 2006; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Stuit & Smith, 2012). The core of the concept of self-efficacy as described by Bandura (1977) is the ability to assess one's capabilities of reaching the desired performance level. Bandura (1997) believed that personal drive motivates people to act. When researchers use social cognitive theory to examine teaching, they describe how teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are related to their achievement and actions (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). According to social cognitive theory, teachers with low expectations regarding their capability to work in certain school settings or with certain types of students often put forth low levels of effort and give up easily even if they have the strategies and the skillset to work under these conditions (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

Beginning teachers are the most susceptible to low self-efficacy beliefs and are most likely to leave the teaching profession within the first few years of their teaching career (Brill & McCartney, 2008). All beginning teachers, regardless of sector or organization, typically

participate in some form of traditional professional development from their school leaders or districts. The needs assessment presented in chapter two shares that among the group of survey respondents and exit survey participants, some of the beginning teachers in Uplift Education believed that the weekly professional development opportunities offered by their school leaders or from the network were insufficient for their needs and did not yield any changes in their practice or improve their ability to deliver instruction or manage their workload. These teachers felt as if they were not being equipped with the resources or strategies to meet the needs of their students. The sentiment of survey respondents and exit survey returners mirrors the sentiment of the teachers that participated in the Yeo, Ang, Chong, Huan, and Quek (2008) study. Teachers that participated in the study conducted by Yeo and colleagues (2008) reported they felt inept or as if they did not have the skillsets to meet the role expectations or the ability to meet the educational needs of their students. Additionally, they reported feelings of low self-efficacy regarding their teaching role. These feelings of low self-efficacy could be a result of the lack of structured professional learning communities and mentoring experiences (in-person and virtually) within those school cultures. Research has shown that when schools have mentoring, induction, and professional learning communities, teachers experience improvements in self-efficacy beliefs (Fulton & Britton, 2009; Mintzes, Marcum, Messerschmidt-Yates, & Mark, 2013; Nolan, 2009). Improved self-efficacy has been shown to be related to teachers' ability to meaningfully change their practices and manage their work (Pinchevsky & Bogler, 2014; Lumpe, Vaughn, Henrickson, & Bishop, 2014; Tscannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Zee & Kohman, 2016).

Teacher mentoring models can support teachers with improving overall role performance, help new teachers to gain confidence in their teaching abilities, and result in an increase in self-

efficacy beliefs (De Neve et al., 2015; Hoy & Speero, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2007; Wyatt, 2015; Yost, 2002). As new teacher self-efficacy improves, Hallam and colleagues (2012) indicate that new teachers' levels of stress decreases over the course of the school year as they gain more experience in the role with the support of their in-school mentor teacher, and they experience an increase in overall job satisfaction. Through external teacher mentoring models, Wyatt (2015) observed both teacher development of role identity and self-efficacy that in turn supports teacher commitment and overall retention. Teachers that have mentoring support from a teacher within their content area (in-person or electronically) demonstrate improvements in their self-efficacy within their content area which often leads to an increase in a teacher's commitment to stay in their teaching role for a longer period of time (Wyatt, 2015).

In an effort to improve teacher self-efficacy and role performance, Uplift Education decided to implement virtual professional learning communities called virtual teacher roundtables. These virtual teacher roundtables lasted for 60 minutes and were facilitated by experienced teachers in the network called course team leaders (CTL) once a month. Each virtual teacher roundtable included teachers that taught the same course in different schools across the network and included an assigned school leader (a Secondary Dean or Director). CTL facilitated each session and were supposed to review the upcoming unit and common assessment, share resources and strategies, and open the session for dialogue to engage in group or individual problems solving. The network was also supposed to offer virtual office hours that were to take place three weeks out of each month. This additional support was intended to ensure that participants are taking advantage of the support from the CTL and adhering to recommended teacher mentoring practices, such as ensuring mentors have consistent opportunities to meet with mentee teachers (Brondryk & Searby, 2013; Cordingly & Bucker, 2012; Mullen, 2012).

Participants were required to attend at least one virtual office hour session per month. However, the network discontinued these virtual office hours due to low participation.

Research Questions

The following five research questions are answered in the evaluation of the intervention:

RQ1: To what extent do teachers receive the professional development as planned?

Which components of the professional development are implemented with the most fidelity? The least?

RQ2: Which supports that are provided by the professional development do teachers perceive as most beneficial to improving their practice? Least?

RQ3: How has teacher perceptions of self-efficacy changed as a result of their participation in the virtual teacher roundtables and office hour sessions?

RQ4: To what extent do teachers report an increase in job satisfaction due to their ongoing participation in the virtual teacher roundtables and office hours?

RQ 5: To what extent is participation in virtual roundtables and office hours related to changes in teachers' stated desire to return to their teaching assignment for SY 2018-2019?

Intervention Evaluation

A mixed methods research design is taken to answer the study's evaluation questions. A posttest used in this investigation includes items from the ICF International Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program Questionnaire (BTIM) employed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate their induction and mentoring programs (ICF International, 2009). The items from the BTIM tool ask participants to rate to what extent certain activities took place during the virtual roundtables, the benefit of some components of the virtual roundtables, and

teacher perceptions of the influence that their participation has on their self-efficacy beliefs, job satisfaction, and their intention to return.

The research design also included the use of semi-structured interviews to capture participants' perceptions of the components of the intervention that were most beneficial in supporting workload management, instructional strategy development, perceptions of support, and influence on self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and intention to return. The interview protocol contained questions that are similar to the questionnaire items. However, the open-ended questions allowed for participants to elaborate on their perceptions of the intervention components on self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and desire to remain in their teaching role for the following school year.

During the virtual roundtables, the majority of survey respondents reported that instructional strategy sharing took place. Moreover, two-fifths of survey respondents indicated that there were opportunities to design and review the curriculum with their peers during the sessions. Both interviewees and survey respondents reported that they seldom received support with workload management during the sessions. From these findings, it appears as if CTL spent more time during the sessions sharing instructional strategies as opposed to the other pre-set agenda items. However, when asked about elements that they found to be beneficial about the sessions, 40% or fewer participants found sharing instructional strategies, having a stronger sense of connection between their network peers, and gaining a new perspective on their strengths and weaknesses to be beneficial. When discussing the benefits of the sessions with interviewees, they mentioned the facilitation and the structured collaboration in the session might have played a role in teachers experiencing the benefits of the virtual roundtable sessions' activities.

Survey respondents indicated that the virtual roundtable session did not improve their beliefs around their overall teaching efficacy. However, more than half of survey respondents indicated that their CTL improved their self-efficacy beliefs. With regards to job satisfaction and teachers' intention to return, both survey respondents and interview participants indicated that their CTL and their participation in the virtual roundtables had little influence.

Due to the sample size, the study's design, and some challenges with implementation fidelity, the findings of this investigation are not generalizable both inside and outside of the network of schools. However, the results do suggest that the network should formalize participation norms and establish a system for close monitoring for quality control and feedback for virtual roundtable facilitators. Secondly, the network and other charter school leaders should consider how they can offer a variety of types of supports that include not only mastery experiences, but also ensure that teachers receive emotional support and vicarious experiences to improve their self-efficacy. In addition, charter school network leaders should ensure that they continue to examine the school-based context to explore further what factors directly influence teacher job satisfaction and teachers' intention to remain in their teaching position.

Further research could also provide some guidance to charter networks regarding the cost-effective essential design of mentor teacher selection and training to aid in developing new teachers. Moreover, this study's results suggest that a more in-depth examination of teachers' collective experiences and views regarding the collaborative culture created in online (virtual) collaboration spaces may provide insight into what extent this type of collaboration influences the overall organizational culture within a charter school network. This type of research may provide charter school leaders more insight into the influence that collaborative organizational cultures (in-person or online) may have on teacher job satisfaction and intention to return.

Chapter 1: Teacher Attrition in the Public School Sector

Policymakers and school leaders are highly concerned about the rising number of teachers who are leaving their districts. Each year about half a million teachers leave their current schools (Simon & Johnson, 2013). The perpetual cycle of poor student performance at a school can lead to increases in teaching job dissatisfaction and teacher attrition (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). Both traditional public schools and charter schools across the country are experiencing these high rates of teacher attrition, and nationally they are spending up to \$7 billion dollars to recruit and train the teachers hired to replace those who have left school districts across the country (Barnes, et al., 2007).

Teacher attrition rates in charter schools are twice that of traditional public schools (Stuit & Smith, 2012). With the growing demand from funders, parents, and communities to build more charter schools, and to maintain their instructional efficacy, charter school leaders are faced with the task of determining and responding to the factors that are contributing to the increase in teacher attrition. Recent research has shed light on the possibility that charter school attrition outpaces traditional public schools due to teacher dissatisfaction with low salaries, working conditions (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2005; 2008; DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Imazeki, 2005; Johnson & Birkland, 2003; Kuckla & Acevedo, 2009; Stuit & Smith, 2011), school leadership competence (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2009; Torres, 2014), and teacher self-efficacy (Burely, Hall, Villeme, & Brockmeir, 1991; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1992; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007). The current charter school expansion movement has the potential to be derailed if charter schools do not address the growing need to reduce the attrition of highly qualified instructional staff.

In North Texas, both traditional public school districts and charter schools are experiencing rising rates of teacher attrition (Sass, Flores, Claeys, & Perez, 2012). According to Berends (2015), charter schools have added 25% more students from 2009-2013 in the North Texas region. With this increase in charter school presence in the North Texas school choice marketplace, school leaders in both the traditional public school and public charter school sectors must be attuned to the increase in the competition for teachers, the maintenance or improvement of student achievement, an increase in spending on recruitment and training of teachers, and be invested in slowing teacher attrition in the region.

Teacher Attrition in North Texas

During the early 2000s, Texas began to experience a population boom due to its healthy economy and renewed interest of non-Texans in relocation to Texas (Gonzalez, Brown, & Slate, 2008). This population growth led to increased student enrollment, thus creating a need for more teachers in school districts. This increased demand for teachers and a growing teacher attrition problem resulted in a teacher shortage across the state of Texas (Gonzalez et al., 2008). Contributing to this problem, colleges of education across the state were not able to recruit and certify enough candidates to fill the number of growing vacancies (Cochran-Smith, 2005).

The Texas Education Association (TEA) defines teacher attrition as the number of teachers that leave the public school teaching force (Texas Education Agency, 2015). In 2011, the teacher attrition rate in Texas was 10.5% and the number of teachers hired during that school year was 7.6% (Texas Education Agency, 2015). During the 2011-2012 school year, school districts were unable to find enough teachers to fill vacant positions caused by both growth and teacher attrition; thus, they more than likely filled these positions with substitute teachers for parts of the year or even for the entire school year in some schools. During the 2013-2014

school year, smaller school districts (districts with 500 or fewer students) across Texas were twice as likely to lose new teachers (e.g., teachers with fewer than two years of previous teaching experiences in Texas) than larger school districts (districts with 50,000 or more students) (Texas Education Agency, 2015). Like small school districts, charter school districts in Texas have not had much success with managing their teacher attrition and recruitment. During the 2006-2007 school year, teacher attrition in charter schools located in Texas was 43% as compared to the traditional public school teacher attrition rate of 16.3% (Booker, Gilpatric, Gronberg, & Jansen, 2008).

Over the last five years, teacher attrition in the North Texas region has outpaced teacher attrition in other regions of the state (Texas Education Agency, 2015). In 2012-2013, the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) had a teacher attrition rate of 17.8% (Texas Education Agency, 2015). This teacher attrition rate was an increase of 5.8 percentage points over the prior school year (Texas Education Agency, 2015). Other school districts in the region saw significant increases in teacher attrition, including the Irving Independent School District whose 2011-2012 school year teacher attrition was 12.9% and rose to 20.5% during the next academic year (Texas Education Agency, 2015). In Texas, the average teacher attrition rate for charter districts in a five-year period between 2006 and 2011 was 46% (Texas Education Agency, 2012). These high attrition rates in both the traditional and charter school sectors have created a highly competitive atmosphere among charter and traditional public school districts across North Texas to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.

Teacher Attrition in Uplift Education

Uplift Education is a network of public, tuition-free, open-enrollment charter schools in North Texas. It currently educates nearly 18,000 students in 40 schools, including a unique

partnership elementary school with Grand Prairie Independent School District (Uplift Education, n.d., para. 1). Over the past five school years, the network of schools has grown by adding two to three campuses per year. The increase in the number of the network schools has led to a large investment in instructional infrastructures such as teacher and leader recruitment and development, data analysis dashboards, standard curricular resources, and centralized learning management systems. The network has struggled to retain first and second year school teachers as its size steadily increases.

Uplift's teacher attrition trend mirrors the trend observed nationally within the charter school sector. Over the past two years, the network has lost more than 20% of its teaching corps to attrition (D. Meyer, personal communication, March 19, 2016). Over half of the teachers who left the network are no longer in the teaching profession while others have moved on to surrounding or out of state school districts (D. Meyer, personal communication, April 5, 2016).

Uplift outperforms the state average by student demographic on almost every State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) tested grade and subject area assessment (Texas Education Agency, 2016). Over 60% of Uplift's high school juniors have a college ready composite ACT score, as compared to 25% of students nationwide and 29% of students in Texas (R. Harrison, personal communication, May 16, 2017)¹. With successful student outcomes and a growing presence in the Dallas Fort-Worth Metroplex, what factors are contributing to Uplift's high teacher attrition?

Theoretical Framework

¹ A college ready composite ACT score is a score of 21 which is made up of averaging the four subject area benchmark sub-scores (Math 22, English 18, Science 23, Reading 22) and indicates that students have a 50 % chance of receiving a B or higher or a 75% chance of receiving a C or better in a college level course in the content area in which they meet or exceed the ACT benchmark score (ACT, 2016).

A campus director at an Uplift Education high school reported that it is difficult for her to keep staff in hard-to-fill positions because the surrounding traditional public school districts offer higher salaries and better incentives from the neighboring traditional public schools districts (S. Noorani personal communication, January 16, 2016). The network has done some work in recent years to learn more about why teachers leave the network including leveraging Bellwether Education Partners, an education consulting firm, to directly address the teacher compensation challenge and to revise the compensation system based on teacher feedback. As a result of the work done by the consulting team and members of the Uplift Education leadership team, the network was able to offer more competitive salaries and benefits for the 2016-2017 school year (J. Meer, personal communication, January 12, 2016). However, the teacher attrition rate only decreased by 3% as compared to the prior school year and remains slightly above 20% (T. Hudspeth, personal communication, September 1, 2017).

In spite of addressing the teacher compensation challenge, the double-digit rates of teacher attrition in Uplift Education remains and requires a more in-depth examination of factors contributing to rates of teacher attrition. To gain a broader perspective on reasons why teachers leave their teaching assignments in Uplift Education it is necessary to examine research literature that addresses why employees leave their places of employment in both the public and private sectors. In the following discussion, I examine Organizational Cultural Theory and Human Capital Theory with the intent of determining whether or not the broader context they offer might offer possible insight as to how network-based practices as well as campus-based practices influence teacher attrition.

The organizational cultural theory explains the shared realities of the members of the organization (Ingersoll, Kirsch, Ehrlich, & Lightfoot, 2000). The realities of the members of the

organization become the basis for the organization's values, beliefs, and practices (Lindahl, 2006). Each organization has different organizational realities, in which the actions of the members of the organization have a high level of influence (Halpin & Croft, 1963; Owens 2004; Tobin, Muller, & Turner, 2006). Within a school setting, the organizational culture takes on the form of the beliefs or assumptions of staff and faculty routines and rituals; interpersonal relationships; the allocation of power, status, and resources; and the way in which the faculty and staff handle stress (Lindhal 2006; Owens 2004; Rosseau 1990). Some charter school networks often create elaborate systems for school management and strict guidelines (e.g., frequent and in-depth instructional delivery and preparation evaluation (DeArmond, Gross, Bowen, Demeritt, & Lake, 2012; Donaldson & Peske, 2010), extensive curriculum planning requirements (Berends, Canata, Goldring, & Penzloza, 2009; Geske, Davis, & Hingle, 1997), mandatory after-school tutoring or additional hours expected for student interventions (Clark, Gleason, Tuttle & Silverberg, 2015; Glennan, Bodilly, Galegher, & Kerr, 2004), which influences how school leaders manage their schools and limit teacher collaboration opportunities (Wei, Patel, & Young, 2014), and teachers perceive as stressful and unsustainable (Forte & Flores, 2014; Jao & McDougall, 2016). When using organizational cultural theory to assess the conditions and character of a school district or charter school network, examining the structures for collegial and school leader support for teachers may provide insight into factors that may contribute to teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2001).

According to Torres (2014) teachers often feel more connected to their respective campuses as opposed to being connected to the larger network or school district. Therefore, beyond the organizational culture established by the charter school network, there are factors on the campus-level that can influence teacher attrition (Renzulli, Parrott, & Beattie, 2011; Torres,

2014). Rickman and Parker (1990) provide a framework for analyzing a person's choice of occupation and the change that occurs when their investment no longer exists in that position or career choice. The human capital theory aligns to what Kirby and Grissmer (1993) suggest happens when an employee makes a decision to stay or leave a company: they weigh the pros and cons of staying before making their final decision. Human capital theories include an individual's assessment of monetary and nonmonetary rewards within a particular profession (Kirby & Grissmer, 1993). Human capital theory suggests that leader and collegial support is not the only consideration that teachers make when deciding whether to remain or leave their teaching assignment (Kirby & Grissmer, 1993). These teachers may also consider a variety of other nonmonetary factors that may influence their decision to exit the profession such as teachers' perceptions of their instructional efficacy (Kallerberg & Mastekaasa, 2001; Cochran-Smith, Channady, McEachern, Piazza, Power, & Ryan, 2010) and their ability to manage their workload (Wang, 2007; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Greenlee & Brown, 2009).

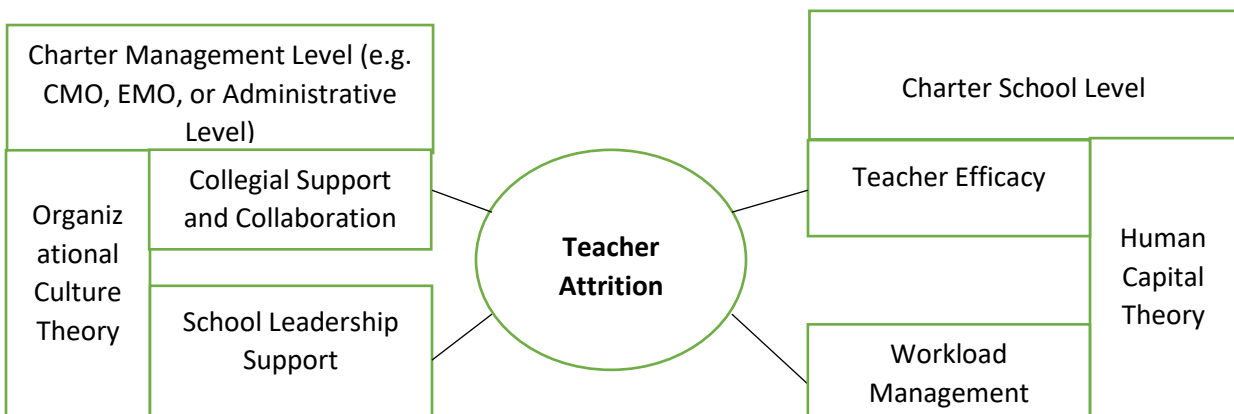


Figure 2.1 Theoretical framework and teacher attrition in charter school context

There are many reasons why a teacher decides to leave their teaching assignment. To examine the research literature regarding teacher attrition in charter schools to gain more of a holistic perspective on teacher attrition, I have used a combination of the factors related to both the organizational culture theory and human capital theory. It is necessary to get a

comprehensive picture of why teachers may leave their teaching assignments to determine which factors to target when crafting an intervention aimed at lowering teacher attrition within a charter network of schools. The left-hand side of Figure 2.1 illustrates that the organizational culture established by the charter school network's administration (e.g., CMO, EMO, administrative team) creates the systems of support for teachers from their colleagues and school leaders when dealing with the demands established by the network's charter. The right-hand side of Figure 2.1 displays the factors that are specific to the actual school setting, according to the human capital theory, teacher efficacy and teacher workload management are influencers of teacher attrition. In some cases, schools are allowed to make some site-based decisions that play a role in determining the conditions which either positively or negatively influence teachers' work lives and, consequently their decision to stay or leave a specific campus.

Literature Review

A review of previous research literature regarding teacher attrition will aid in developing an understanding of the high level of teacher attrition within the charter school sector by looking at how organizational cultures can play a role in influencing peer and school leadership support. Additionally, this section examines the new teacher experience within the charter school sector by looking at how teacher self-efficacy beliefs around instructional delivery and teacher ability to manage their workload, as suggested by human capital theory, could also provide insight as to the possible contributions of these factors on teachers' decision to leave their teaching position.

Organizational Cultural Drivers of Teachers' Decisions to Stay or Leave

Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) play a large role in establishing the organizational culture through the structures for school level management. Some charter school networks establish rigid daily schedules for teachers which account for few opportunities for

teachers to collaborate with one another due to teacher preparation periods being taken by mandatory tutorial or intervention periods (Torres, 2016) or meetings with the school administrators for instructional observation feedback (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). This often leaves little time for peer-to-peer collaboration or in some cases few structures around how to leverage teacher collaboration (Dury & Baer, 2011; Robfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015). Further, the high premium that charter school operators put on school leaders providing regular evaluative feedback on teacher instructional practice can often create an intense culture where teachers internalize a high level of leader support as a negative critique of their instructional practice (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). Below I discuss, how the role that collegial support and collaboration, and school leader support play in teachers' decisions to remain or leave their teaching assignment.

Social support of colleagues and collaboration. Some teachers work with colleagues who they do not have positive relationships with and others describe their colleagues as aggravating (Clement, 2017; Herman & Reinke, 2015). Clement (2017) reports that teachers cite bullying on their teaching staffs and others find that the workrooms are consumed with gossip, high levels of sarcasm, and a fair deal of relational aggression amongst members of the teaching staff. In these type of school environments, teachers experience negative organizational cultures which can lead to them experiencing high level of stress when it comes to relating to peers (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Louis & Marks, 1998; Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Some teachers express a need to be positively connected to their peers (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Gruenart, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) and express a negative disposition toward working with others with whom they have toxic working relationships (e.g., gossip, negative interactions). Several studies have uncovered that teacher connectedness may be related to teacher stress (Flook,

Goldberg, Pinger, Bonus, & Davidson, 2013; Manik & Rothman, 2015). New teachers who work in negative environments, like those referenced above, are more susceptible to being dissatisfied with their teaching assignments (Smethem, 2007).

Over the last fifty years, teacher perspectives about collaboration have changed. Lortie (1975) explains that in the past, teaching in isolation was a byproduct of the institutional characteristics that are firmly grounded in the historical contexts of public school development, such as the physical egg-crate design and “cellular organization” of the schools that divides classrooms and separates teachers (Flinders, 1988; Lortie, 1975) and limits interpersonal connections between teachers to form (Festinger, Schater, & Back, 1950). Further, historically high rates of teacher attrition and student mobility require school and district administrators to organize teachers in a way that makes reduction in teacher force, increases of staffing, or replacement easier (Calabrese, 1986; Flinders, 1988; Gaikwood & Brantly, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Lieberman & Miller, 1992). Speaking from the school management perspective, Cookson (2005) suggests that keeping teachers’ functions independent of one another, and obstructing interdependence, allows for more flexibility in dealing with the loss of teachers or with increasing and declining student enrollment.

However, Wolman (2010) shares that since 1956, teachers favor having a mentor or colleague who helps them to teach and since 1990 teachers rank collaboration as the most important factor in their success in their role (Dury & Baer, 2011). Further, research literature supports the clear link between teachers’ commitment to teaching and their relationships with their colleagues (Allensworth et al., 2009; Guarino, Sanitbanez, & Daley, 2006; Rosenholtz, 1989). Thus, the question becomes, “What are the factors that need to be in place that are beneficial with respect to collegiality for teachers and the organizations they work for?” Prior

research highlights three crucial factors: 1. Collaboration structures 2. Shared goals and mission 3. Relational trust.

Collaboration structures. Teachers rely on one another for both personal and professional needs (Simon & Simon, 2015). New teachers often look for schools where they can learn from another teachers' practice (Little, 1982). Schools have to establish systems for collaboration or professional development around practice sharing that are separate from other types of discourse and work experiences (e.g. social lives, failures, demands). The creation of school norms around professional collaborative culture is vital (Kardos, 2001) because when schools fail to create these structures with intentional outcomes and practices, teachers often find these collaborative experiences to be a waste of their time and negatively influence teacher satisfaction and retention (Kardos, 2001). When new teachers do not have personalized support, they are more likely to leave their teacher assignment (Cocharan-Smith, et al., 2012; Donaldson & Johnson, 2012; Kardos & Johnson, 2010).

Shared goals and mission. When teachers feel as if there is no common goal they are less willing to work with one another (Rosenholtz, 1989). When teachers work in schools where they believe their peers are not cooperative and resist change, they are more likely to leave their teaching assignment (Allensworth, 2009; Cochran-Smith, et al., 2012; Kardos & Johnson). Schools where teachers perceive their colleagues to have negative attitudes, a lack of culturally responsive teaching, and low expectations cite these as reasons why they leave their teaching position (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011). Teachers express a strong desire to work in a school where they share common beliefs about their goals and mission as an instructional staff (Jarzabowski, 2002; Merdith, 2006). Or conversely, teachers that find themselves working at schools with frequently changing missions or the introduction of new initiatives with little

follow-up and alignment to established goals (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007) often get frustrated and dissatisfied with the district, the school, and the school's leadership and express a desire to leave their teaching position (Simon & Johnson, 2015; Torres, 2016).

Relational trust. Prior research defines trust as a teacher's confidence that an expectation is met (Bradach & Eccles, 1989; Rosseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998) as a critical factor to determine teacher collegiality in a school organizational context (Rosseau et al., 1998; Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007). Research focuses on teacher trust, trust between an individual teacher and other members of the teaching staff (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2011; McEvily, Weber, Bicchieri, & Ho, 2006), faculty trust, and repeated interactions between teachers in the same school that result in the collective opinion of the level of trustworthiness of multiple groups of colleagues (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Shamir & Lapidot, 2003).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) emphasize the need for teachers to have school-based relations where they trust one another to build community. When teachers doubt other teachers' perspectives, motives, and have very little trust, they are not willing to work with one another (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). When teachers don't feel as if they can trust their colleagues, they are more likely to seek employment somewhere else (Simon & Simon, 2015). Teacher perception of both teacher and faculty trust positively influences teachers' professional attitudes (Tschannen-Moran, 2009); teacher collaboration (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001); and teacher collective efficacy (Goodard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2001). There does exist a gap in the literature around the relationship between teacher trust and their job satisfaction (Van Maele, & Van Houtte, 2012). However, there are number of other studies from multiple industries that indicate that

trust creates higher levels of job satisfaction (Chou, Wan, Wang, Huang, & Sheng, 2008; Dirks & Ferin, 2001; Matlzezer & Renzl, 2006).

The role of school leaders. Another contributing factor to teacher attrition might also be support from the school leader. School leaders establish systems that define and support both adult and student culture. These campus cultures are at the heart of the character of the learning community. School leader competence, defined as the principals' ability to effectively lead the school, has been identified as a driver of teacher attrition most influential within the charter school sector (Boyd et al., 2006). Examining the relationship between the school leader and teacher may prove helpful in uncovering the potential influence this relationship has on organizational culture within the charter school context.

School leadership at charter school networks have the ability to establish organizational cultures and campus practices that may be unique when compared to those of their traditional public school peers (Farrell, 2014). For example, some charter school networks have strict disciplinary policies, extended learning times, high-academic standards, regimented style referred to as "no excuses policies," and growth mindset expectations for both their staff and students (Torres, 2016). The potential stress created by these types of demanding policies and practices within organizational cultures that have a "results now and doing whatever it takes orientation" can create feelings of disillusionment among teachers (Stuit & Smith, 2012). Teachers become overwhelmed when they do not feel as if they can meet the high expectations of the school's leadership team (Boyd et al., 2006).

Weak organizational systems designed by school leadership that do not support the demands placed on teachers is another set of factors that are related to teacher attrition in schools across the country (Boyd et al., 2006; Gawlik, 2007). Although there are large charter CMOs,

others are standalone schools, some are part of Education Management Organizations (EMOs), and others are relatively new startups (Hassel, Hassel, & Ableidinger, 2011). In some of these settings, weak organizational systems may exist by the pure nature of the newness of the school and its lack of organizational systems (Roch & Sai, 2015).

Getting oriented to and working within a school culture requires the intentional support of the school leadership team (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015; Simon & Johnson, 2015). This support can take many forms such as instructional coaching and feedback (Khactaryan, 2015; Kraft & Gilmour, 2015; Papay, 2012; Sinnema & Robinson, 2007), establishing professional learning communities (Bryk & Schneider, 2004; Forsyth, Barnes, & Adams, 2006; Hallam, Smith, Hite, Hite, & Wilcox, 2015), developing systems for resource procurement (Hughes, Matt, O'Reilly, 2015), student discipline policy enforcement (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Dahlkamp, Findley, 2015; Peters, Schumacher, 2017), and having open door policies to discuss teacher concerns and questions (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Holmes, 2016; Hughes, Matt, O'Reilly, 2015; Kline, 2012). The amount of support given by school leaders to teachers can influence a teacher's perception of the effectiveness of a school leader in managing the learning community (Bogler, 2001; Kline, 2012). School leader competence is the perception of a leader's ability to manage the learning community. Studies conducted and controlled for various working conditions, school climate, and student composition found that for both experienced and new teachers, perceptions of administrative support and leadership were the strongest predictors of teacher attrition (Borman & Dowlin, 2008; Boyd, et al., 2011; Ladd, 2011). Schools where teachers receive high levels of support from their school leaders report high levels of teacher job satisfaction and low levels of turnover (Birky, Shelton, & Headley, 2006; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Boyd et al., 2011; Ingersoll, 2003; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Mihans, 2008; Thonton et

al., 2008; Turnbull, 2004). Other studies conducted have come to similar conclusions regarding support and leadership as significant predictors for stability within the learning community and teacher turnover (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012; Marinell & Coca, 2013).

Within the charter school context, many school leaders range in years of experience, and charter schools are more often led by school leaders with fewer years of experience as compared to those in traditional public schools (Bitterman & Goldring, 2013). Further, many new leaders have to create systems and structures with little to no support from their network (Torres, 2014). Currently, very little research exists that examines teacher perceptions of school leadership within the charter school sector and the potential influence their perceptions may have on teacher attrition rates. With the rapid pace of expansion and sense of urgency around improved student outcomes, an examination of leader practice and teachers' perceptions of school leadership could add to the body of scholarship around teachers' perception of school leadership and teacher attrition within the charter school context.

Research regarding employee turnover has been examined in many other fields and typically considers aspects of the organization's stability with regards to employee turnover (Mueller & Price, 1990). Using the organizational culture theory to examine teacher attrition in charter schools could potentially provide plausible explanations as to why certain factors known to contribute to teacher attrition may have more influence within the charter school sector as compared to the same factors within the traditional public school sector. One may also uncover factors that are unique to the charter school sector that may be influencing teachers to leave their teaching assignments at a higher rate than teachers at traditional public schools. When examining what is making teachers change their minds after they committed to teaching, beyond

the support that they receive from their colleagues and school leaders, it is necessary to get a broader perspective on personal factors that may be driving teacher attrition in charter schools.

Human Capital Drivers of Teachers' Decisions to Stay or Leave

These personal factors along with the external support of colleagues and the school leadership that influence teachers' decisions to stay or remain in their teaching assignments may combine to have a high level of influence on teachers' desires to remain in their teaching assignment. Learning more about how teachers' perception of their self-efficacy, an integral component of the human capital theory, may help gain another perspective on factors that contribute to teachers leaving their teaching assignments in the charter school sector. Further, examining teacher perceptions of their ability to manage their teaching workload provides insight into how the day-to-day responsibilities of their role can influence their decision to leave or stay in their teaching role. In the sections below, I discuss how teacher self-efficacy and teacher workload management influence teacher attrition.

Teacher self-efficacy. Teachers' sense of their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) is linked to their investment in teaching (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bishop, 1992; Guskey, 1988), career goals (Muijs & Reynolds, 2002), desire to persist in times of adversity (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007), and their resilience when faced with setbacks (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998). Beginning teachers are most susceptible to experiencing periods of low self-efficacy and are likely to leave the teaching profession after their first and second years of teaching (Brill & McCartney, 2008). Novice teachers have few opportunities to build mastery (Redman, 2015). Therefore it is to be expected that the formation of their self-efficacy beliefs plays a pivotal role in their development and desire to stay in the profession (Burley et al., 1991; Glickman &

Tamashiro, 1982). Teachers with low self-efficacy tend to focus on their deficits, feel threatened by things in their surroundings, and exaggerate potential risks (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

When teachers feel as if they are not successful with groups of students, they give up easily and they do not put much effort into planning and instructional delivery (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). If the teacher does not feel they will be successful, they will not introduce or use the strategy—even when they know applying these strategies can be helpful (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs “become self-fulfilling prophecies, validating beliefs either of capability or incapacity” (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 4).

Multiple factors including student engagement and outcomes influence teacher efficacy beliefs (Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014). Teacher efficacy beliefs improve when they experience success in their teaching performance (Buel & Beck, 2015; Klassen, Durksen, & Tze, 2014). Teacher efficacy beliefs decrease if they believe that their teaching performance yielded poor student outcomes, they then predict they will fail in the future (Blonder, Benny & Jones, 2014). Teachers make personal judgments of their strengths and weaknesses. When teachers do not feel as if they are capable of completing a task, they feel as if they do not have the personal ability to meet the needs of the context (Buel & Beck, 2015; Klassen, Dirksen, & Tze, 2014). When new teachers enter the profession, they are excited about their potential impact and experience a “reality shock” when they learn that being a teacher is more difficult than they anticipated (Weinsten, 1988). In this case, teachers tend to adjust their standards, often lowering them to avoid the feeling of failure (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Feelings of low self-efficacy eventually lead to low levels of job satisfaction and teacher attrition (Mottet et al., 2004). Contrarily, Wheatley (2002) suggests there are times when teachers who doubt their

effectiveness are motivated to develop their practice and work towards success in the future when they receive the appropriate level of support. Some charter school networks tout their ability to grow students several grade levels per year and present lofty goals like 100% college enrollment (Davis & Heller, 2015). These ambitious goals place a high level of pressure on teachers and increase the daily workload demands of teachers within the charter school sector (Davis & Heller, 2015). The growing workload often becomes difficult to manage and may also play a role in a teacher's desire to remain in their teaching assignment (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005).

Teacher workload management. When working in traditional public school settings, the district often mandates master schedule models, school year length, class size, and other operating factors that create consistent expectations in the organizational culture for leaders, teachers, and students. In charter schools, the autonomous nature of the school system allows for a great degree of flexibility in determining the policies that impact the organizational culture.

Charter schools are not mandated by federal or state law to follow class size, teacher schedule, or school year models. They often create schedules to maximize student learning to meet the high expectations established by school leaders. In some instances, charter school teachers find themselves with class sizes of 33 or more students, daily schedules with minimal amounts of planning time, and working an extended day and school year (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005; Torres, 2016). These factors can create very stressful working conditions that lead to high levels of burnout and teacher attrition. Teachers cited the factors above as being reasons why they chose to either leave the profession or switch to a teaching assignment in a traditional public school (Boyd, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Ladd, 2011; Loeb et al., 2005).

Average teacher turnover within Charter School Management Organizations (CMO) funded by the New School Venture Fund is around 20% (Furgeson et al., 2012). In the KIPP Public Charter Schools network the teacher attrition rate was 32% during the 2011-2012 school year (Ferguson et al., 2012). In CMO networks, charter school teachers reported increased workloads as compared to traditional public school teachers (Ni, 2012). Former KIPP and newly established charter school teachers say that burnout due to the time and effort teachers are required to put into their jobs was their primary reason for leaving their charter school assignments (Woodworth, David, Guha, Wang, & Lopez-Torkos, 2008; Vasudeva & Grutzik, 2002). A teacher who works more than 60 hours a week is 1.6 times more likely to leave their teaching assignment than are those teachers who work less than 60 hours per week (Stuit & Smith, 2010).

Conclusion

Charter school teacher attrition has the ability to derail the expansion of a charter network within the school choice sector. A growing charter network like Uplift Education in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex must be cognizant of this reality and examine both network and campus-based practices to reduce teacher attrition with positive student outcomes. The organizational cultural and human capital theories offer a broad contextual framework to investigate the reasons why teachers leave their charter networks and their schools. CMO network leadership should be more intentional about evaluating the support provided to their school leaders to ensure that they are supporting teachers and establishing systems on campus that allow for teachers to help one another and feel nurtured by a healthy organizational culture.

Further, on the school level, campus leaders have to ensure that they understand the role that teacher efficacy beliefs play in attrition. School leaders have to learn more about what their

teachers' needs are to either directly support or find alternative methods for development to meet their teachers' needs. Also, as suggested by human capital theory, school leaders need to learn more about the teacher workload and why it is driving teachers to leave their teaching positions. As is undertaken in the next chapter, assessing a charter school teachers' workload in conjunction with a charter school teachers' perception of support to better manage their workload and improve their instructional delivery will provide keen insight as to what specific school and network systems and practices for support may influence a teacher's decision to stay or leave their charter school teaching assignment.

Chapter 2: Needs Assessment Conducted in a Charter Management Organization (CMO)

As mentioned in chapter one, research has shown that the level of support provided to teachers by their colleagues (Allensworth et al., 2009; Guarino, Sanitbanez, & Daley, 2006; Rosenholtz, 1989) and school leaders (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015; Simon & Johnson, 2015), especially with regards to workload management (Burke, Aubusson, Schuck, Buchanan, & Prescott, 2015; Torres, 2014) and teacher instructional delivery (Pogodzinski, 2014; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014), can provide helpful insight into teachers' beliefs about their ability to execute their role responsibilities and their desires to leave their teaching positions. I used the review of literature and the theoretical framework presented in chapter one to conduct a needs assessment in Uplift Education with the goal of discovering the extent to which Uplift Education provided the critical elements discussed in chapter one and where the organization falls short (e.g., opportunities for teacher collaboration, consistent support from school leadership and peers around instructional delivery, and workload management). Specifically, within a charter school network, I examined if there exists a relationship between teachers' perceptions of support provided and their perceptions of their ability to manage their workload as well as to deliver instruction. Subsequently, I examined if teachers' perceptions of their ability to manage their workload and their capacity to deliver instruction has an influence over teachers' decisions to leave their network teaching assignments.

Needs Assessment Questions

To guide the investigation of the needs assessment I sought to find answers to the three research questions below:

1. To what extent are teachers' perceptions of support (e.g. collegial, school leader) attributed to their desire to remain in or leave their teaching assignment?

2. What support systems and practices (e.g., teacher collaboration) within an organizational context are likely to positively influence teachers' ability to manage their workload and their perceived capacity to deliver instruction?
3. To what extent are teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding their ability to manage their workload and their perceived capacity to deliver instruction related to their stated reasons for leaving their teaching assignment?

Methods

Research Design

I used a mixed-methods approach so that I could gain a clearer picture of how the type of support provided to teachers may play a role in not only their perceived abilities with regards to role execution (e.g. workload management, instructional delivery), but also their intention to remain in their teaching role. The design of the needs assessment was non-experimental and used a deductive research approach and descriptive statistics to provide an explanation for root causes associated with teacher attrition within a charter school context. The limitations of what could be considered a one group post-test design are two-fold. First, this design is susceptible to many threats to internal validity, such as history and maturation (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). Secondly, the sample makeup and size may not be representative of the entire teaching population within the network of school and limits how much I can generalize the findings for the entire teaching corps. However, the needs assessment and analysis provided helpful information and insights into teacher perceptions of support from their colleagues and school leaders. Additionally, I was able to examine how teacher perceptions of their own efficacy regarding workload management and instructional delivery may play a role in teacher attrition within this specific charter school network.

I began by reviewing existing quantitative and qualitative data from the network's teacher exit survey. I used pre-identified codes including workload management, collegial support, school leader support, and intent to leave when reviewing the teacher exit survey data. This data is gathered by the network's Human Resource Department once an employee provides notice that they are leaving the network to learn more about the reason for departure. I also gave a questionnaire that was modified from a Title I School Teacher Attrition Survey (Knauer, 2014) to both current and former charter school network teachers. An email was sent to 100 current Uplift Employees with two years of experience by the Uplift Human Resources Department. There was a total of 210 second year secondary teachers in the network during the 2015-2016 school year. These teachers were randomly chosen by the Sr. Director of Human Resources. The Human Resource Department also sent an email on my behalf to 54 former Uplift Education teachers that completed the network exit survey between January 2015 and January 2016 with two years of experience prior to leaving the network. Once I received the survey responses I calculated and compared mean values from both groups of participants with regards to the ratings of their perceptions of support provided and reasons why teachers may leave (for current teachers) and why teachers have left (for former teachers) their positions. A qualitative inquiry technique, interviews were used to gain more insight into teacher perceptions of factors that may contribute to teachers leaving the charter network. Semi-structured interviews allow for exploration, probing, and the generation of questions that may shed light a particular subject matter (Patton, 2003). To further develop central themes of this needs assessment around factors that impede teachers from remaining at their charter school teaching, a general interview guide approach was utilized. During these interviews I sought to learn more about how teachers are supported with their workload management and development of instructional expertise during

their tenure with the network. I used emerging codes to analyze the qualitative data from the interviews. The section below provides greater detail into who the participants were for this needs assessment.

Participants

For the teacher exit survey, survey responses were gathered from Uplift Education Human Resource Department. The data includes responses from teachers with a minimum of one full year of experience teaching in the network. To gather perspectives from groups of teachers across different grade levels, responses were collected from primary (n=20), middle school (n=20), and high school (n=11) teachers. A total of 51 responses were gathered out of the 176 teachers that left the network after the start of the 2014-2015 school year.

The modified Title I Teacher Survey from Knauer (2014) was sent to 151 teachers (100 current teachers were randomly chosen by the human resources department and 51 former teachers that completed the network exit survey) with at least one year of tenure in the network in addition to former teachers with at least two years of tenure before their departure from the network.

Of the 151 possible participants, 19 current and 14 former Uplift Education teachers completed the online questionnaire as noted in Table 2.1. There were 28 female teacher participants and four male teacher participants as noted in Table 2.2. Also included Table 2.1, of the 19 current Uplift Education faculty members and 14 former Uplift Education teachers, the majority (66%) of the current teachers were between the ages of 22 and 35 years of age, while the majority (71%) of the former teachers identified themselves as being between 22 and 30 years of age.

Table 2.1

Needs Assessment Participants' Ages

	Percentage of Current UE Teachers (n = 19)	Percentage of Former UE Teachers (n = 14)
<i>What is your age?</i>		
22-25	5.56%	28.57%
26-30	38.89%	42.86%
31-35	22.22%	14.29%
36-40	5.56%	7.14%
Over 40	27.78%	7.14%

Note. This question was intended to collect basic demographic data (age) from the participants (19 current Uplift Education teachers and 14 former Uplift Education teachers).

Table 2.2

Needs Assessment Participants' Gender

	Percentage of Current UE Teachers (n = 19)	Percentage of Former UE Teachers (n = 14)
<i>What is your gender?</i>		
Male	16.67%	14.29%
Female	83.33%	85.71%

Note. This question was intended to collect basic demographic data (gender) from the participants (18 current Uplift Education teachers and 14 former Uplift Education teachers).

Of the current teacher participants, 61% identified themselves as Caucasian, 22% identified themselves as African-American, 11% classified themselves as Asian, and 6% as Hispanic. Seventy-one percent of former teachers identified themselves as Caucasian, 14% identified themselves as Hispanic, 7% identified themselves as African-American, and 7% identified themselves as Asian, as noted in Table 2.3. In accordance with institutional review

board regulations for human subjects' research, written informed consent was obtained from all subject prior to participants taking the questionnaire.

Table 2.3

Participants' Race/Ethnicity

	Percentage of Current UE Teachers (n = 18)	Percentage of Former UE Teachers (n = 14)
<i>Q4. What race do you best identify with?</i>		
Caucasian	61.11%	71.43%
African-American	22.22%	7.14%
Hispanic	5.56%	14.29%
Asian	11.11%	7.14%
Other	0.00%	0.00%

Note. This question was intended to collect basic demographic data (age) from the participants (19 current Uplift Education teachers and 14 former Uplift Education teachers; there was one non-respondent).

At the end of the survey, participants were asked if they were willing to take part in a face-to-face or phone interview. Six participants agreed to participate in the interview. A total of six teachers participated in the interview portion of the needs assessment: three current and three former teachers. One participant is a second-grade primary school teacher, one is a middle school English/language arts teacher, and one is a high school humanities teacher. Of the former teacher participants, one teacher was a primary fine arts teacher, one teacher was a middle school mathematics teacher, and one was a high school English/language arts teacher. Of those teachers participating in the interview portion of the study, two out of the three current teacher participants were female, while all three of the former teacher participants identified as female.

Measures

Exit survey. At Uplift Education, exit surveys are requested from each employee departing from the network. Teachers have the choice of meeting a human resource department

representative to complete an exit interview, or they can fill out the survey online. The interview and the online survey contain the same questions (see Appendix L). Employees receive survey links at their personal email accounts just before or following their departure from the network. All information is housed electronically and is only accessible by members of the Human Resource team and C-level administrators within the network. According to the Human Resource Department Representative, most exit surveys are completed on-line by employees. However, the return rate for exit surveys is less than 50% (D. Meyer, personal communication, July 12, 2016). Network officials speculate that because completion of the survey is optional, many teachers may not feel compelled to complete the survey due to no penalty nor network established expectation to complete the exit survey. There were only 51 exit surveys completed by teachers during the January 2015 to January 2016 window. The network expected between 75 to 100 surveys returned during this one-year period (D. Meyer, personal communication, July 10, 2017). The exit survey asks an open-ended question about why departing teachers chose to leave the network. Data collected from this survey will be used to address the first and third needs assessment question posed earlier: “To what extent are teachers’ perceptions of support (e.g. collegial, school leader) attributed to their desire to remain in or leave their teaching assignment?” and “To what extent are self-efficacy beliefs regarding their ability to manage their workload and their perceived capacity to deliver instruction related to their stated reasons for leaving their teaching assignment?”

Title I school teacher attrition survey. The survey located in Appendix A is the second part of the data collection for this investigation. The Human Resource Team provided the names of current and former eligible teachers selected at random to participate in this study. Current and former Uplift Education teachers received an email via Survey Monkey with a link to the survey.

The survey included questions to capture teachers' general demographic information (e.g. age, sex, number of years of experience, subject area), job satisfaction ratings, types of support provided, and perceptions of teachers' rationale for leaving their teaching position. This tool was adapted from the questionnaire used by Knauer (2014) to examine teacher attrition in Title I schools. The survey consists of 30 items. Knauer (2014) did not include any reliability information regarding survey items. The second needs assessment question, "What support systems and practices (e.g., teacher collaboration) within an organizational context are likely to positively influence teachers' ability to manage their workload and their perceived capacity to deliver instruction?" as rated by participants from 1 (no influence at all) to 5 (significantly influence) on a 5-point Likert scale. Participants were asked to rate how different types of support offered by the network have positively influenced their ability to manage their workload and deliver instruction with the following: (2): "Professional development has helped me to offer better instruction"; "My mentor has helped me learn to manage my workload"; "My school leader offers me support with curriculum and instruction"; and "My instructional coach provides me with feedback that helps me to improve my instructional delivery."

The tool also includes items used to determine what types of supports the participants have been provided while with the charter school network. The survey poses bimodal questions that ask if participants "have ever been a part of a mentoring program on their campus." It then inquires if participants with mentor program experience "found the experience beneficial" and asks those who have not had mentor program experience, if they felt "a mentor would have changed their experience in the charter school network." Participants were asked one open-ended question: "What type of support have you been provided that has helped you to manage

your workload and/or improve your instructional delivery?” to gain more information to address the second needs assessment question.

Ten of the questions asked participants to rate how certain factors may influence teachers within the network’s decision to remain or leave their teaching assignments ranging from 1 (no influence at all) to 5 (significantly influence) on a 5-point Likert scale. Items used to answer the third needs assessment question “To what extent are teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs regarding their ability to manage their workload and their perceived capacity to deliver instruction related to their stated reasons for leaving their teaching assignment?” were: “Balancing the needs of students, parents, and paperwork”; “Dealing with multiple responsibilities: IEP meetings, lesson planning, paper grading”; “Managing my workload inside and outside of the classroom”; “Experiencing personal success when delivering instruction to students.”

Interview tool. The final segment of this investigation involved a qualitative assessment through the use of interviews. Questions during the interview were adapted from the interview tool used by Knauer (2014) and are located in Appendix B. The interview includes 10 questions that ask participants to elaborate on a. the role of their perceptions on their ability, b. the support provided to manage their workload, and c. how their efficacy in delivering instruction plays in their decision to remain or leave their teaching role. Interviews were semi-structured and conducted face-to-face at a local coffee shop that was convenient for the interviewee by the lead researcher. I assured all participants of the anonymous nature of the study and explanation of the rationale for the study and the use of its findings. Interviews ranged from 15 minutes to approximately 45 minutes. In some portions of each interview, some follow-up questions were asked. The interview remained conversational. At the conclusion of each interview, the

information gathered was summarized and recapped to ensure the recording of all of the important ideas shared by each participant.

Data Analysis

Responses to questions stating that support from school leadership/peers or workload management led to their departure from the network were tallied and recorded and entered into a data analysis software program. Quotes that spoke to recurring themes in the exit survey data samples that referred to support, workload, or perception of their own effectiveness of instructional delivery were recorded to open response items on the exit survey. Further, I listened to recorded interviews and took notes. I compared notes from the actual interview to the notes from the recorded interviews to ensure that all thoughts and sentiments in written form were documented. From there I compared notes across interviews and captured recurring themes. I gathered survey data from section two and three of the survey in Appendix B and averaged respondents' ratings of each factor's influence on teachers' decision to leave their teaching assignment. These mean ratings were gathered to compare means of both former and current teachers' ratings regarding certain factors related to both workload management and instructional delivery efficacy, and their influence on teachers' decision to leave their teaching assignment.

Findings

Research Question One: Perceptions of Support and Practices That Influences Teacher Attrition

Findings from the interview portion of this investigation uncovered new themes not observed when analyzing the exit survey data and questionnaire results. Three participants mentioned that they appreciated the perks of the Wellness Wednesdays and Working

Wednesdays that were offered by the network to provide teachers with unstructured time to plan independently or in teams (their choice) and to have time take care of personal needs. One interviewee mentioned how having extra time to herself helped her balance her workload and her personal needs. One teacher mentioned that she liked having the support of her mentor teacher because it felt like her school leader was too busy to provide her with emotional and curricular support.

A common theme observed throughout each component of the needs assessment is the concern raised by participants regarding the support from the school's administration. From the exit survey data, respondents' answers from those who left the network for reasons other than being dissatisfied with their school's leadership, appeared to have a consistent theme of satisfaction with the level of support provided by their campus leader. One respondent shared that her leader "was the only remaining reason why I would consider staying in this organization...my Director is strong and supportive." However, most respondents that shared positive remarks about their school leader left the network for relocation, more compensation, graduate school, or due to the working conditions. Those who explicitly stated that they were leaving the network due to their dissatisfaction with the school's leadership mentioned that "the leaders micro-managed them" and felt as if the leader's efforts were more "nit-picky than supportive" or that the leader was "retaliatory towards staff members that were not favored." There appeared to be a common theme amongst this group of respondents that leaders demonstrated bias when giving support to teachers on their team.

When comparing the interview results to the survey data around teacher perception of "administrative support," the data on Table 2.4, which includes the mean of former Uplift teacher participant ratings for "administrative support," provides additional insight. The mean of

the ratings for “administrative support” as an influencing factor on former teachers’ decision to leave the network is 3.29 on a 4.00 scale. This mean score is the average of all respondents’ ratings for a specific question. For this particular question, the mean of the ratings (3.29) is closer to the maximum rating of 4 which would appear to indicate that this factor may be influential in a teacher’s decision to leave the network. However, due to the small sample size of participants, this finding has no statistical significance. For the current teachers that participated in the survey the mean rating listed in Table 2.3 for “administrative support” is 3.59 on a 4.00 scale. Though the mean rating for current teachers for “administrative support” on the questionnaire is higher than that of former teachers due to the small sample size, I cannot conclude as to whether or not this difference in means has any significance. Nor does the difference between the means capable of signifying a relationship between the influences of teacher perception of administrative support on teachers’ decision to leave their teaching assignments. Factors such as being able to manage a large workload, balancing stakeholder and paperwork needs, and experiencing instructional delivery success (e.g., high student outcomes, favorable instructional delivery evaluation) received similar mean ratings (greater than 3.0 on a 4.0 scale) from both current and former teachers. These ratings may be indicative of participants’ perspectives and could be influential factors in a teacher’s decision to leave or remain in their teaching assignment.

Table 2.4

Mean Ratings of Factors that Influence Teacher Attrition

	Mean Ratings of Current UE Teachers (n = 18)	Mean Ratings of Former UE Teachers (n = 14)
Administrative support (e.g., support	3.59	3.29

provided to you by administrators)

Balancing paperwork and stakeholders	3.71	3.69
Meetings (e.g. IEP, coaching sessions)	3.22	3.29
Large workload	3.59	3.69
Experiencing classroom instructional		
Success (e.g. favorable evaluation	3.50	3.56

ratings, high student outcomes)

Note. There was one non-respondent.

Research Question Two: Support Systems and Practices That Positively Influence Teacher Ability to Manage Their Workload and Capacity to Deliver Instruction

Through the review of the exit survey data, the questionnaire, and interview responses, the following themes emerged about the influence of teachers' perceptions of support regarding their ability to manage their workload and improve instructional delivery. Throughout each phase of the investigation, a common theme emerged regarding the frequency, type, and quality of classroom coaching and observation feedback that teachers received from their school leaders, their instructional coach, or peers. From the exit survey data, 12 teachers mentioned that they received regular classroom observation and feedback from their manager. However, one participant added that "my director (principal) gives me low-leverage feedback, it does not change my practice at all, and (he) only does it for compliance." One mentioned that her course team leader (a teacher in the network that teaches the same course and writes the curricular documents for the course), provided her feedback twice each year and it was "more helpful than anything that her Dean (assistant principal) has ever given me." Another participant felt that the

campus teacher leaders on his campus did not provide much help at all, were inexperienced, and had no intention of staying beyond their “two-year Teach for America commitment.”

In the open response section of the survey, a teacher mentioned that each week their campus leaders or some of the teacher leaders on their campuses give professional development sessions on a variety of topics ranging from unit planning to effective questioning. There seemed to be mixed results regarding whether participants felt as if the Wednesday professional development sessions helped them to improve their ability to manage their workload and instructional delivery. In Table 2.5 mean ratings regarding whether teacher participation in campus-based professional development improved the teacher's ability to manage their workload was approximately 2.8 out of 4.0 for both current and former teachers. Teacher ratings of the effectiveness of school leader coaching and observation feedback on teacher perceptions of their ability to manage their workload and to deliver instruction was a 3.2 out of 4.0 for both current and former teachers. Nine teachers (seven current teachers and two former teachers) said that they had a mentor during their first year in the teaching role at Uplift Education.

Table 2.5

Mean Ratings of Types of Support Rendered that Influences Workload Management and Instructional Delivery

	Mean Ratings of Current UE Teachers (n = 18)	Mean Ratings of Former UE Teachers (n = 14)
Campus Professional development (e.g. Half-Day professional development)	2.81	2.87
Support from Mentor Teacher	3.00	2.95
School Leader Coaching and Feedback	3.21	3.29

During the interview portion, five out of the six participants felt as if there was a need for school leaders to provide differentiated experiences. One participant observed that “weekly professional development and coaching sessions should be differentiated by years of teaching and content specific.” He wanted to have more opportunities to develop “stronger content knowledge” but felt as if his development was being “stunted” and that “school leaders seem to be able to coach their content only.” He went on to explain that teachers on his campus used their content specific professional learning community time for “menial tasks not related to planning or instruction.” He expressed this lack of support as one of his reasons for leaving his teaching position. One participant said that she got the most support regarding workload management and instructional delivery from her assigned campus mentor teacher who taught her same subject. She said that “she found this person easier to talk to” and her mentor “had the experience that she needed with grading papers and managing the classroom.” Findings from the interview portion of this investigation uncovered new themes not discovered when analyzing the exit survey data and questionnaire results. Participants in the interview portion of this study all mentioned that Uplift has a large number of new teachers. A few expressed that new teachers need more support and sometimes the school leader and their colleagues are too busy to give them the support that they need. The majority of the participants spoke to the lack of coaching and accountability for new teachers; one participant mentioned that “experienced teachers receive very little support from school leaders,” and another said that “new teachers get all of the coaching and feedback.” Many reported that they felt unsupported by leaders on some campuses even after asking for help. One interviewee said that she asked for “multiple opportunities to go visit high performing teachers and never got the chance to see good teaching in action.” Overall,

teachers with more tenure shared that they experienced a lack of attentiveness and that they received less coaching and feedback as they demonstrated more competence and accrued more years of experience.

It appears as if the network of schools has existing structures designed to support teachers such as common planning time for professional learning communities and designated time for professional development (e.g., Wednesday). However, depending on a school leader's efficacy and authentic implementation of these structures many teachers, new and experienced, do not experience the benefits of this support regarding it impacting their workload management and instructional delivery. Some school leaders provide support to teachers that teachers do not find meaningful. Other network teachers believe that school leader motivation to provide specific supports is born out of compliance, are low in quality, or that school leaders prioritize the needs of certain teachers and leave other teachers' needs unmet. However, new teachers who had assigned mentors to provide them with support regarding instructional delivery and workload management when they began working on their campus felt as if the mentor teachers' efforts were valuable and positively influenced their ability to manage their workload and improve their instructional delivery.

Research Question Three: Workload Management, Instructional Delivery, and Teacher Retention

Human capital theory suggests that teacher preparation and the teacher workload are potential drivers of teacher attrition (Cochran-Smith, Channady, McEachern, Piazza, Power, & Ryan, 2010; Greenlee & Brown, 2009). To investigate this claim further, participants were asked whether teacher perceptions of their ability to manage their workload and their perceived capacity to deliver instruction is related to their reasons for leaving their teaching assignment.

All three components of this study revealed an overwhelming theme regarding the negative influence that a teacher's difficulty managing their workload has on teachers' decisions to leave their teaching assignment.

Workload management. Exit survey data analysis yielded four key findings when it came to assess the teacher workload. In the open-response section of the survey, former teachers shared that the following factors contributed to their leaving the network: a. the large amount of time spent working both inside and outside of the school day; b. excessive lesson planning requirements; c. the lack of time during the day allotted for planning; and d. additional duties outside of their classroom. Current employees that participated in the interview echoed similar sentiments. One interviewee shared that he "cannot continue to take on additional responsibilities without further detriment to himself." He mentioned "wanting more of work-life balance. However, the student needs and demands from the campus leadership team are just too great" and "the schools do not provide enough support to get all of the work done." Former Uplift teachers that participated in the interview said that they felt that "burnout was inevitable" and that the demands of the network favored the energy reserves of a "young teaching demographic." However, she felt as if they (new teachers) were "burning out just as fast these days."

Of the indicators used to assess the influence of the teachers' workload on their decision to stay or leave their teaching assignment both groups of respondents (current and former teachers) had the highest mean rating for the "workload" category. In fact, the former teacher mean ratings for "workload" was the highest mean out of all of the indicators assessed in this study for that group of participants. "Workload" mean ratings for current teachers was second to

“leadership” and “salaries.” Again, due to the small sample size the statistical significance of these mean values cannot be determined.

Table 2.6

Mean Ratings of Teacher Perceptions of Influence of Various Factors on Teacher Attrition

	Current UE Teacher Mean Ratings of Factors Influence On Decision to Stay in Role UE Teachers (n = 18)	Former UE Teacher Mean Ratings of Factor Influence On Decision to Leave Role UE Teachers (n = 14)
Workload (e.g., in/outside of the classroom)	3.78	3.71
Salary (e.g., compensation for responsibilities)	3.83	3.21
Job Stressors (e.g., dealing with students/parents, paperwork, time)	3.53	3.36
Students (e.g., dealing with student issues, discipline, ability levels)	3.33	2.57
Additional Responsibilities (e.g., ARD meetings, lesson plans, meetings, paperwork, lunch duty, carline)	3.28	3.38

Instructional delivery. On the exit survey open response items, three teachers mentioned that they left the network because they did not receive much support around how to meet the needs of all students. One respondent said that he did not feel prepared nor was he given any guidance around how to deliver instruction to “a large English Language Learner student population” or given specific “strategies to meet the needs of the special education students or the gifted and talented students.” While conducting participant face-to-face interviews, one interviewee said it would have helped if the school had provided more

intentional professional development around middle school classroom management. She felt as if the school often handed out the book “Teach like a Champion” and expected teachers to be master classroom managers. She stated that this impacted her ability to teach the content to her students and to return because she “struggled with keeping her students on-task throughout the lesson.”

Conclusion

From the needs assessment, it is clear that multiple factors are potentially influential in teachers deciding to leave their teaching positions from Uplift Education. The network of schools seems to lose teachers early on in their tenure for reasons most frequently associated with workload management. Further, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis from open response survey data questions and interviews yielded trends regarding teachers’ perceptions of support (e.g., professional development, school leader, and mentor) as determining factors in whether a teacher chooses to leave or stay in their current teaching assignment.

The low return rate of the network exit surveys, the small sample size with regards to the questionnaire, and the small number of interview participants that prevent the generalizability of these findings are limitations of this investigation. However, the implications of this investigation point to the need for charter schools to identify and implement interventions that provide early career teachers with support around their workload management and how to make teachers feel more supported as they develop their overall instructional effectiveness.

Early career teachers have to get accustomed to the organizational context, as well as supporting all students in meeting academic outcomes (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Both of these endeavors can be difficult to manage without ongoing support or high levels of preparation (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Moreover, as mentioned in chapter one, when applying human

capital theory to the charter school context, teacher efficacy beliefs and workload management are two factors that are influential when examining teacher attrition (Boyd, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Ladd, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). This finding is borne out by needs assessment participants who made claims that specific support around the management of the workload is necessary due to the enormous demands placed on them within the charter school context due to the extended school day and academic year. Early career charter school teachers need support in establishing classroom management expectations (Johnson & Birkland, 2003; Torres, 2016), management of their workload (Boyd, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Ladd, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011), curriculum planning (Guin, 2004; Johnson, Birkland, Kardos, Kaufmann, & Peske, 2001; Levine, 2006), extra duties (Charner-Laird, Ng, Johnson, Kraft, Papay, & Reinhorn, 2015), and content area or grade level pedagogical knowledge (Beswitt, 2007; Bray, 2011; Campbell et al., 2004; Ingersoll, Merrill & May, 2014). Lastly, some participants in the needs assessment expressed the need to collaborate with, observe, and to work with other teachers from other schools that teach the same content or course to learn from their practice and to enhance their classroom practice.

If the rate of teacher attrition is expected to decrease, charter school networks need to address how they support teachers in managing their workload and help them to improve their instructional effectiveness. As will be revealed in chapter three, research literature indicates that interventions that aid in the development of school campus cultures allow teachers to develop authentic and collaborative relationships with their teaching peers. Additionally, the next chapter will provide an analysis of research centered on how different school districts support teachers with managing their workload and instructional effectiveness and improve teacher self-efficacy regarding their role expectations.

Chapter 3: Support for Early Career Teachers

The goal of this chapter is to examine the literature of interventions designed to support early career teachers in gaining peer and school leader support to develop their skill set regarding workload management (e.g., unit planning, lesson planning, paper grading, school duties) and instructional delivery. The results from the needs assessment discussed in chapter two suggested that there is a need for new teachers to have a formal support system. Moreover, teachers expressed a need to have guidance around how best to manage their workload and improve their ability to deliver instruction that meets the needs of their students. Some teachers interviewed in the network expressed that they enjoyed the support that they received from their on-campus mentor and their course team leader, and in some cases their school leader. The review will examine research-based interventions that have demonstrated a positive influence on improving teacher retention by providing teachers with support from both school leaders and peers that teachers find valuable to help them better manage their workload and improve their instructional delivery. Moreover, the review will inform key components of the intervention to be discussed in the latter part of this chapter. Specifically, I focus on interventions including different types of teacher mentoring programs and teacher professional learning communities, and how they address factors related to teacher attrition.

Mentoring Early Career Teachers

To support teachers in developing skill sets around managing their workload and delivering classroom instruction, many school districts have implemented teacher mentoring programs that support the development of teacher skill sets with regards to workload management (Achinstein & Fogo, 2015; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009), role performance (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, Varadharajan, & Burke,

2018; Smith & Ingersoll), and student achievement (Epstein & Willhite, 2015; Hanushek, 2016; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Below is an examination of teacher mentoring programs aimed at improving teacher role performance. By doing so, the best of findings should be able to be molded together to develop a refined program to support new teachers and positively impact their retention.

In-school teacher mentoring programs and professional learning communities. In-school mentoring programs provide teachers with customized and differentiated support that they often need to improve their perceptions of their ability to manage their workload and improve their instructional delivery (Achinstein & Fogo, 2015; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). In-school teacher mentoring can take on many forms. Some school districts assign current faculty to provide mentor support and may also provide professional learning community (PLC) structures where teachers new to teaching or new to the school can get the assistance they need to be effective in their role (Brill & McCartney, 2008; De Neve, Devos, & Tuytens, 2015; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Mahfud, 2017; Tam, 2015). These types of structures provide new teachers with the support they require and can influence them to stay in their teaching assignment beyond their first year (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Cohen & Brown, 2013; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Rasberry & Mahajan, 2008). New elementary school teachers who received in-school mentor teacher support and participated in PLCs remained in their teaching assignments longer than those who received external coaching school support (Fall, 2010; Hallam, Chou, Hite, & Hite, 2012; Lasagna, 2009; Rikard & Banville, 2010; Shermoff, Martinez-Lora, Frazier, Jakobsons, Atkins, & Bonner, 2011). In-school mentoring and PLC structures allow for more frequent communication of instructional priorities, expectations, and opportunities to be responsive to teachers' individual needs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Mahfud, 2017; Tam, 2015)

which, as shown in the theoretical discussion in chapter one, is critical to establishing school norms around professional collaborative culture (Kardos, 2001) and providing teachers the personalized support they need to remain in their teaching assignments (Cocharan-Smith, et al., 2012; Donaldson & Johnson, 2012; Kardos & Johnson, 2010). However, as teachers progress through the early years of their careers, there is a change in the type of support that they need (Hallam et al., 2012). If in-school teacher mentoring models are to remain influential over the course of a teacher's career, consideration of the teacher's changing needs is essential.

As teachers progress in their careers, the frequency of communication between them and their mentor tends to lessen, in that the newer teachers know more about the organizational culture and systems of the school and need less support in navigating the school (Hallam et al., 2012). However, many new teachers find comfort in knowing that their classroom and their mentors' classroom are in close proximity (Hallam et al., 2012). Teachers report spending more time collaborating with their mentor teachers as their careers progress and they gain more confidence in their teaching to seek more leadership roles in their PLC (Hallam et al., 2012). The sense of confidence, comfort, and degree of autonomy to collaborate with their mentor teacher speaks to the newer teachers' emotional development during their time while being in an in-school mentoring program (Hallam et al., 2012). Though the types and experiences of support are changing throughout the early tenure of a teacher's career, mentoring provides an emotional experience that positively influences a teacher's decision to stay in their teaching assignment (Burke, Aubusson, Schuck, Buchanan, & Prescott, 2015).

When implementing an in-school mentor teacher program, the aim is to support new teachers in getting acclimated to the role(s) they play and the school in which they play them, as well as to provide them with the assistance they need to do their job effectively. In-school

mentoring programs typically set-up schedules for teachers and mentors to meet regularly to discuss and work on topics that range from campus policies to lesson planning. Though the mentor-mentee relationship is a formal arrangement, in-school mentors and mentees typically talk frequently throughout the week (Long et al., 2012). Many in-school mentors check in with their mentees weekly or even daily, to ensure that the new teacher is managing his/her current workload and to determine how as a mentor they can support the new teacher (Long et al., 2012). In some cases, the in-school mentor teacher provides regular coaching and feedback to their mentee teacher and supports them with instructional delivery and curricular planning (Hallam et al., 2012; Long et al., 2012).

Though the results from studies of schools that have implemented in-school mentoring programs are promising, it is important to note that the positive benefits for teachers and potential influence on teacher retention are dependent on the efficient implementation of the programs (Devos, 2010). School districts that did not implement in-school mentoring programs with fidelity (e.g., establish and monitor mentor/mentee check-in schedules, require feedback from participants throughout the program, require mentor/mentee participation in district or school meetings/orientations) did not see any influence of the mentorship program on district teacher retention rates (Bullough, 2012). Though some research suggests in-school mentoring models are useful in influencing teacher retention, when the mentor and mentee do not teach the same content or grade level many new teachers do not receive the type of support mentioned above and may find other mentoring models more beneficial (Bradbury, 2010). Faced with this dilemma, it is only natural that some schools have to surmount it by reaching beyond their walls and try external mentoring.

Reciprocal mentoring models. Mentor and mentees support one another in reciprocal mentor models. This approach allows opportunities for new teachers to share their expertise with experienced teachers on campus while the experienced teacher shares their learning community and pedagogical expertise with the new teachers (Hartsuyker, 2007; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Paris, 2013).

In Australia, graduate students enrolled in an art and music teacher preparation program that includes a reciprocal mentor experience (Ormond; 2011; Paris, 2013). The reciprocal mentor experience takes place during the graduate student's final year of graduate studies. The school identifies a project which matches the graduate student's expertise. The program then provides the graduate student the opportunity to learn more about the learning community, students, and the role of being a teacher outside of their course work and practicum experience (Paris, 2013). While only the resident teaches lessons, the graduate student, however, is considered the expert.

During the second phase of the reciprocal mentor program, the mentee starts their first year teaching, and the experienced teacher with whom they developed a relationship with during the residency phase supports the new teacher in their role on the campus. The mentor teacher helps the new teacher gain a placement in some cases and supports them pedagogically and emotionally throughout their first year of teaching whether they teach at the same school or different schools (Paris, 2013). Often new teachers who had this type of assistance credit their mentors as the reason why they remained in the profession beyond their first year (Hartsuyker, 2007; Ormond; 2011; Paris, 2013).

External face-to-face teacher mentoring programs. External mentor programs include subject specific support from an experienced teacher who does not work in the school of their

assigned mentee teacher and plays no role in evaluating the mentee teacher's performance.

Schools typically use external mentors when subject specialists are not available in schools to act as mentors. This phenomenon usually occurs in hard-to-fill content areas, like higher level science and mathematics (Hillier, de Winter, & Twidle, 2013). Few studies on external mentoring programs are available; however, of those carried out, most focus on the benefits of teachers' identity formation through their participation in an external mentor program (Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2010; Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2012). A teacher's identity is composed of a teacher's desire to engage in a set of practices related to their role (e.g., subject area or grade level taught), the authority to carry out this role, and the influence of discourse with other teachers about their beliefs (Settlage, Southerland, Smith & Cegile, 2009).

In cases where new teachers come with little content knowledge and pedagogical expertise, the need for a subject-specific content expert mentor is higher. McIntyre and Hobson (2016) examined the influence of external mentors on the formation of physics teacher identities. They found that external mentors helped teachers develop a stronger content knowledge and instructional practice. The setup of most external peer models allows for new teachers to meet and communicate with their external mentors as needed. Also, mentors and mentees typically attend gatherings (e.g., dinners or professional development opportunities) to collaborate and network with other program participants. These opportunities allow for the mentee to communicate questions, concerns, and frustrations about their school learning community in a productive and safe space (McIntyre & Hobson, 2016). Their mentors do not play a role in evaluating the teacher and can offer support and advice on how to navigate situations and provide the tools to communicate effectively with their peers in the school setting (McIntyre & Hobson, 2016). This type of assistance enhances and builds the mentee's teacher role identity.

Although external mentoring models can offer content-specific support, they rely heavily on new teacher participation. Most models studied mention several new teachers do not use the support provided by the external mentor programs due to their inability to manage the demands of the job to make time for collaborating with their external mentor, and thus never receive any mentoring support (Hobson & McIntyre, 2013; McIntyre & Hobson, 2016). Secondly, the sample sizes of most of the studies reviewed were small and present reliability and generalizability concerns (Hobson & McIntyre, 2013; McIntyre & Hobson, 2016). Both internal and external face-to-face mentoring program participants have to work hard to ensure that they are able to meet with a regular cadence. They must plan times to meet, typically within the school day, for both internal and external mentoring programs. The mentor and mentee also have competing priorities (e.g., meetings, teaching, grading, duties) as well as geographical distance for external mentors that prevent regular face-to-face meetings from taking place; which can limit the potential positive influence of the mentoring relationship on the mentee's experience in the program. Some mentoring programs embrace the use of technology as a way to increase the regular meeting cadence and prevent geographical distance from getting in the way of communication and support provided by the mentor to the mentee.

E-mentoring. Single and Muller (2001) define e-mentoring as a relationship formed via electronic communication by a more senior person and an inexperienced colleague, to improve the skill set and confidence of the inexperienced teacher. Being independent of time and place, e-mentoring that takes place over email or asynchronous communication allows for mentors to respond in more detail and more thoughtfully (Bierema & Merriam, 2002; Single & Muller, 1999; Watson, 2006). Informal mentoring experiences with regular frequency are more beneficial than formal mentoring programs (Single & Muller, 2001).

To improve the effectiveness of e-mentoring programs, researchers advocate for structures that allow for e-mentoring experiences that occur on a regular cadence (Single & Muller, 2001). Structured e-mentoring experiences allow for intentional training, guidance, and a focus on participant engagement (Watson, 2006). Watson (2006) examined an e-mentoring program that allowed for the pairing of pre-service teachers with experienced teachers in the United States. The pre-service teachers found the e-mentoring experience to be beneficial in helping them to understand more about teaching strategies, assessments, paperwork, evaluation, classroom management, and time management.

E-mentoring can also be very challenging to implement and sustain. For example, The Novice Teacher Support Project Online found that without face-to-face meeting times, the mentee teacher was chiefly responsible for keeping the relationship going (Ensher, Heun, & Blanchard, 2003; Klecka, Clift, & Thomas, 2002). In addition, Ensher, Heun, and Blanchard (2003) present five challenges for e-mentoring programs: (a) miscommunication between mentor and mentee; (b) relationships develop more slowly than in face-to-face relationships; (c) technology difficulties; (d) privacy issues. Proper training of mentors and mentees can help overcome some of the challenges mentioned above to make e-mentoring a viable option in the absence of or in addition to formal face-to-face mentoring experiences. Mentor training typically provides guidelines on how to create a meeting agenda, review of topics typically addressed during mentor sessions, some interpersonal skill development, and guidance around providing support to mentees to help them build their own skill sets (Ambrosetti, 2014; Dawson, 2014; Kutsyoruba, Godden, & Tregunna, 2017).

Virtual professional learning communities. Teachers have used Internet-based methods of collaboration with one another to offer effective classroom instruction. Virtual

professional learning communities (VPLC) as described by Ford et al. (2008) is a method that uses internet resources or various forms of media to share practices and ideas. VPLCs can come in multiple formats including Twitter (Trinkle, 2009), blogs, wikis, and video conferencing (Charlambos & Michalinos, 2004; Duncan-Howell, 2010; O'neill, 2002; Sorenson & Munchu, 2004). These methods allow for teachers to collaborate with one another despite geographic barriers (McConnell, Parker, Eberhardt, Koehler, & Lundeberg, 2012). Unfortunately, there are only a few research studies that examine the use of video conferencing to support teacher learning. Ullman (2010) explores the use of a weekly VPLC targeting teachers that work in rural areas. The participants in the study found travel to professional development programs that meet their needs as costly and arduous and considered the use of synchronous or asynchronous video conferencing a satisfactory alternative to traditional professional development programs (Ullman, 2010).

Participants in the McConnell, Parker, Eberhardt, Koehler, and Lundeberg (2012) VPLCs mention that sharing articles, hearing practical solutions, and having a strong focus on professional discourse and accountability in the group were clear benefits of their participation. Participants also enjoyed meeting with teachers from other schools and felt as if they were more on-task during the VPLC. However, they also felt as if there was not enough time to have personal discourse as they would in an in-person professional learning community (McConnell et al., 2012). Moreover, although VPLCs participants experienced the same benefits as those that participated in face-to-face PLCs, they preferred engaging in the latter due to technical factors such as lag time in the audio for the video conferencing as well as the fact that they do not get meals as they do in the face-to-face meetings (McConnell et al., 2012). However, all participants

believed that participating in the VPLCs is a reasonable alternative when travel to a face-to-face meeting is not an option (McConnell et al., 2012).

Regardless of the mentoring model used—be it external, internal, face-to-face, virtually, or within a professional learning community—each system of support is designed to increase teachers' efficacy beliefs and improve their role performance (e.g., workload management, instructional delivery) (Burley et al., 1991; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). High levels of self-efficacy, delivering high-quality instruction, and contributing positively to student outcomes helps early career teachers have the confidence, ability, and desire to persist through adversity during the beginning years of their teaching careers (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Learning more about how mentoring programs improve teacher self-efficacy beliefs will uncover key components of an effective intervention designed to improve teacher self-efficacy, instructional delivery, and workload management; thereby reducing teacher attrition within the context of a network of charter schools.

Mentoring, Professional Learning Communities, and Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher mentoring models can support teachers with improving overall role performance and help new teachers gain confidence in their teaching abilities; thus resulting in an increase in self-efficacy beliefs (De Neve et al., 2015; Hoy & Speero, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2007; Wyatt, 2015; Yost, 2002). As new teacher self-efficacy improves with experience in the role and support from their in-school mentor teacher, Hallam and colleagues (2012) indicate that new teachers' level of stress decreases over the course of the school year while overall job satisfaction increases. Through external teacher mentoring models Wyatt (2015) observed both teacher development of role identity and self-efficacy that in turn supports teacher commitment and overall retention. Teachers that have mentoring support from a teacher within their content

area (in-person or electronically) demonstrate improvements in their self-efficacy within their content area which often leads to an increase in a teacher's commitment to stay in their teaching role for a longer period of time (Wyatt, 2015).

Teachers that work in isolation and feel alienated tend to have low self-efficacy beliefs (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Teachers that participate in professional learning communities and have more frequent opportunities to collaborate with their peers have a better chance of improving their efficacy beliefs over time (Mintzes, 2013; Marx, 2016). Further, teachers that work in schools with strong collaborative cultures tend to take on more leadership roles and take responsibility for student learning (Kohn & Nance, 2009). When teachers feel as if they benefit from the collaborative relationships that they have with their colleagues, they tend to feel more efficacious and more likely to have a positive influence on student learning (Kohn & Nance, 2009).

Teachers begin to develop their sense of efficacy as early as student teaching (Hoy, 2000). It is important that school districts and leaders consider the appropriate types of support during the induction and early career periods of a teacher's career. New teachers that are provided training and support around their role performance (e.g., workload management, instructional delivery) early in their career are more likely to see increases in their sense of efficacy, that can in turn yield higher job satisfaction and increase the likelihood of remaining in their teaching assignment (Hallam et al., 2012; Spencer, Harrop, Thomas, & Cain, 2017; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2007).

Teacher self-efficacy and peer support. Social cognitive theory provides some insight into the possible sources of the sense of efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2007). Social cognitive theory suggests that through *reciprocal determinism*, personal behaviors and personal

beliefs (self-efficacy) influence one another as they interact with the environment (Bandura, 1977). Thus, an examination of school contexts (environments) that intentionally interact with the supportive development of teacher self-efficacy (beliefs) and influence teacher performance (behaviors) is a next step in developing an intervention aimed at curbing teacher attrition in a charter school context (see Figure 1). As mentioned above, teachers that have mentors and regularly participate in PLCs experience in their self-efficacy beliefs the ability to manage their workload (Hallam et al., 2012; Holzberger, Phillip, & Hunter, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2011) and deliver high-quality instruction (Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997; Guskey, 1988; Holzberger, Philipp, & Kunter, 2013; Morris, Rothschild, & Brassard, 2006; Ross, 1998; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Wolters & Daugherty, 2007; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990).

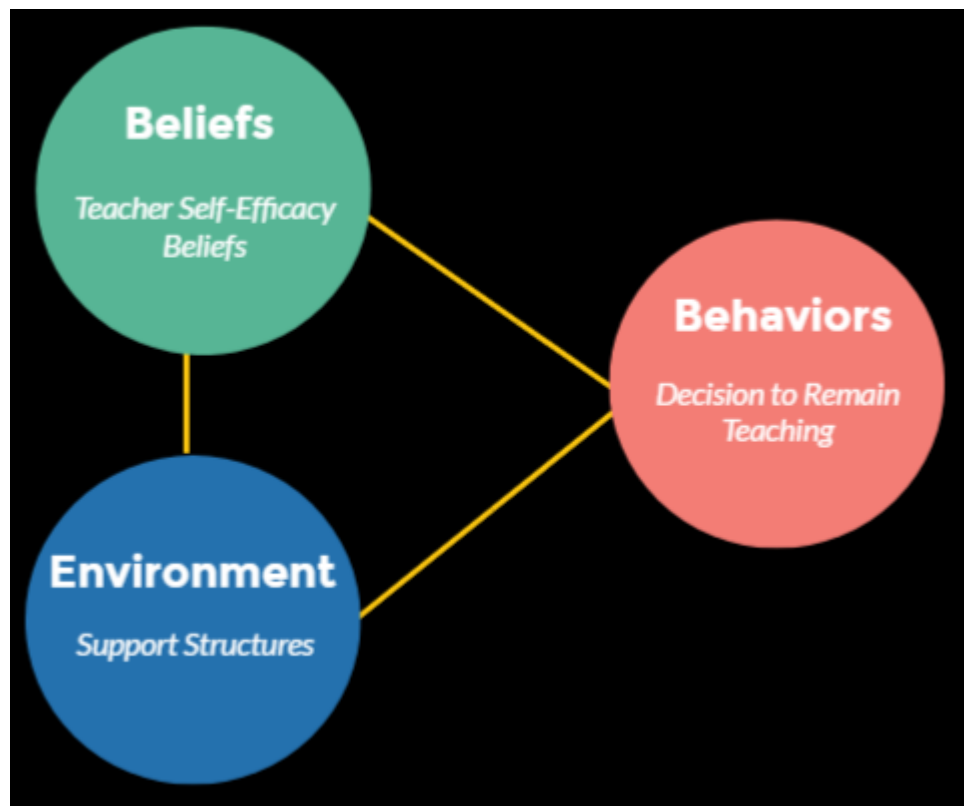


Figure 3.1. Diagram of the theoretical framework that uses Bandura's reciprocal determinism to explain the interrelatedness of teacher self-efficacy beliefs, the supportive school environment

established by school leadership, and resultant teacher behaviors regarding teachers' intention to remain in their teaching position.

The core concept of self-efficacy as described by Bandura (1977) is the ability to assess one's capabilities of reaching the desired performance level. Bandura (1997) believed that personal drive motivates people to act. When researchers use social cognitive theory to examine teaching they describe how teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are related to their achievement and actions (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). According to social cognitive theory, teachers with low expectations regarding their capability to work in certain school settings or with certain types of students often put forth low levels of effort and give up easily even if they have the strategies and the skillset to work under these conditions (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

The most influential factors related to teachers' self-efficacy development are *mastery experiences* (Bandura, 1997). *Mastery experiences* are instances where people achieve goals through perseverance and see others perform or manage other tasks successfully in spite of obstacles (Bandura, 1997). To limit low efficacy beliefs, one thing that teachers have to change is their perception of prior performance failures that contribute to their low expectations for future performance (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Support provided by teachers' peers through mentoring and professional learning communities can offer these mastery experiences that teachers need to positively influence their self-efficacy. Specifically, peer teachers can share past failures and how to overcome those obstacles with early career teachers. Peer teachers can provide advice to early career teachers as to avoid or overcome certain pitfalls. They can also walk new teachers through lesson plan exemplars and planning resources to help the early career teacher learn from the mastery experiences that the peer teacher has already encountered in their career, all with the intention of building the early career teacher's self-efficacy and role execution.

School environment and self-efficacy. The use of mastery experiences allows for the intentional use of mentor teachers to support early career teachers in building their self-efficacy when it comes to workload management and instructional delivery. However, according to the principles of reciprocal determinism, the interactions between a person's beliefs and environment are critical when it comes to the influence on a person's behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Gaining a better understanding of the role played by *verbal persuasion* in teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy is important when considering how to create environments that positively interact with teachers' beliefs (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

Verbal persuasion refers to the act of convincing someone that they are capable of completing a task by providing constructive feedback (Bandura, 1997). The verbal interactions that teachers have with others about their performance and success are valuable in the context of developing self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Receipt of feedback from school leaders, colleagues, parents, and students all aid in the teachers' perception of their role in the school community and their efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). The motivational construct of self-efficacy is based on a person's perceived competence as opposed to their actual degree of competence (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Bandura (1977) suggests that teachers' standards constitute effective teaching and will impact their perception of self-efficacy. Peer teachers can play a role in supporting a teacher's development of self-efficacy by implementing practices that help establish the school's environment and culture around feedback. When teacher mentors offer praise and make suggestions for ways to improve practice, it shows the new teachers that they are doing well and that they are capable of getting better. These types of verbal interaction can provide a boost in early career teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

Building Virtual Mentor Support and Professional Learning Communities

The results from the needs assessment discussed in chapter two suggest that there is a need for new teachers to have a formal support system. Moreover, teachers expressed a need to have guidance around how to best manage their workload and improve their ability to deliver instruction that meets the needs of their students. Some teachers interviewed in the network expressed that they enjoyed the support they received from their on-campus mentor and course team leader, and in some cases their school leader. The literature reviewed earlier in this chapter indicates that there is a need for new teachers to have more formal support from their peers to increase teacher self-efficacy. The support can come in multiple forms including one-on-one mentor support and collaborative environments where all teachers share their practice and work towards achieving a common goal. The research literature suggests new teachers are more likely to remain in their teaching assignment when they are provided this type of support (Burley et al., 1991; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982).

Considering the findings from the needs assessment and the review of literature regarding interventions aimed at improving teacher retention through building self-efficacy, intentional support around workload management and instructional delivery, Uplift Education leveraged and enhanced their current teacher support infrastructure. Prior to the 2017-2018 school year, Uplift Education provided support to all teachers in each grade level (primary) and course (secondary). Uplift Education used Content Teacher Leaders (CTL) to extend support to teachers by having CTLs share all of their curricular resources (e.g., lesson plans, unit plans, PowerPoints) on Blackboard with teachers that teach their respective courses throughout the network. Although this level of support existed, many teachers that left the network cited not feeling supported and having difficulty managing their workload and being capable of delivering effective instruction to students. To enhance this structure beyond just curricular support for the entire 2017-2018

school year (August 2017 – May 2018) the network adopted a model where the CTLs act more as e-mentors and intentionally made an effort to build teacher efficacy for all secondary teachers within the network. In doing so, Uplift Education can determine whether or not implementing teacher mentoring programs report decreases in their teacher attrition rates (Hallam, Chou, Hite, & Hite, 2012). Taking prior e-mentoring research into consideration, the intervention required that the CTL hold monthly, course-specific Virtual Office Hours open to all teachers across the charter school network. Teachers had the opportunity to receive individual support from their CTL during their Virtual Office Hours to answer more specific questions that supports their role execution. In doing so, Uplift Education wanted to learn if e-mentoring can reduce the feelings of isolation and improve self-efficacy for new teachers (Hunt, Powell, & Mike, 2013).

Secondly, in the intervention, the CTL facilitated course-specific virtual professional learning communities, called Virtual Teacher Roundtables. Schools with established and content-specific professional learning communities reported high levels of collective efficacy and have seen positive influences on teacher retention (Brinson & Steiner, 2007; Hallam, Chou, Hite, & Hite, 2012). The virtual teacher roundtables provided school leaders, teacher leaders (CTL), and early career teachers and their peers the opportunity to participate in the monthly virtual sessions designed to improve teacher instructional pedagogy, content knowledge, and thus, efficacy. Uplift Education hoped that use of this format could prove to be beneficial in that teachers view video conferencing as a favorable option to face-to-face meeting if transportation is a factor (McConnell, Parker, Eberhardt, Koehler, & Lundeberg, 2012). Moreover, virtual learning communities allow for the sharing of resources, knowledge, and teaching methods that can lead to improved performance and self-efficacy (Rolando, Salvador, Souza, & Luz, 2014) that otherwise might not occur (e.g., if face-to-face is the only option). The CTL facilitated

monthly meetings (fourth Wednesday of each month) to discuss workload, course planning, and instructional pedagogy for their respective courses. The goal of this intervention was to provide more workload support and direct support from content-specific experts within the network to build teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and decrease teacher attrition.

Conclusion

By leveraging a virtual platform, the intervention had the potential ability to build a support network that extends beyond the walls of each school and connects teachers across Uplift Education, which spans across the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Teachers that have participated in virtual professional learning communities felt as if the virtual platform provided teachers an alternative to in-person professional development when the locations of professional development sessions were too far to travel (McConnell et al., 2012; Ullman, 2010). Due to distance between Uplift Education schools, the virtual platform allowed teachers to meet on a regular (monthly) basis to share expertise and offer one another support. The regular meetings with their virtual learning community peers provided new teachers in Uplift Education with a support network that they hope will aid in developing teacher knowledge around workload management and instructional delivery (Achinstein & Fogo, 2015; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009).

Secondly, the intervention provided the opportunity for experienced peer teachers to offer intentional instructional, pedagogical, and emotional support to early career teachers while also building collective efficacy amongst members of the virtual professional learning community. Findings from the needs assessment in chapter two suggest that some teachers found it helpful to have the support they needed from more experienced peers to further develop their teaching practice. Since each campus does not offer mentoring support, the intervention allowed for all

new secondary teachers in the network to receive support from their peers and more experienced teachers.

Further, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, these mastery experiences are the most potent factors related to teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). It is vital for Uplift Education to provide intentional systems of teacher efficacy building through the use of other teachers so the overall teacher role performance can improve (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Moreover, through the participation in the virtual office hours and roundtables, new teachers had the opportunity to receive feedback and exemplary models of instructional practice from their CTL and peers. Verbal persuasion from peers is fundamental in a learning community where teachers are expected to further develop their competence. This verbal persuasion from their CTL and other teaching peers may aid in building teacher self-efficacy.

The interaction between teacher efficacy beliefs and supportive environments that teachers will gain via participation in the virtual office hours and roundtables could influence teachers' behavior in the classroom (Holzberger, Phillipp, & Kunter, 2014), their job satisfaction, and desire to return to their teaching roles (Hallam et al., 2012; Spencer, Harrop, Thomas, & Cain, 2017; Tschannan-Moran et al., 2007). Teachers with high self-efficacy that work in supportive school environments are more likely to find their teaching job satisfying and are more likely to stay in the profession beyond their first year of teaching (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Stuit & Smith 2012; Torres, 2014). This high level of intentional advocacy for building self-efficacy and creating supportive work environments has the potential to improve teacher perceptions of support, job satisfaction, and desire to remain in their teaching assignment within Uplift Education. The next chapter proposes evaluation methodology regarding the effectiveness of the intervention.

Chapter 4: Intervention Procedure and Program Evaluation

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures used to evaluate the potential influence that participation in both virtual teacher roundtables and virtual office hours will have on early career teachers' attribution of changes in their self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and intention to remain in their teaching assignment. My hypothesis is that early career teachers that participated in virtual teacher roundtables and virtual office hours during the 2017-2018 school year will report increases in self-efficacy beliefs, job satisfaction, and positive intentions around their desire to remain in their teaching career for the following school year. The chapter proceeds by first outlining the specific research questions that guided the investigation, a discussion of the design of the study, descriptions of the data collection instruments used, analytic approaches, and concludes with a discussion of the potential limitations to the study design and methodology.

Research Questions

There are two categories of questions that guide the research for this study. First it will be important to determine the extent to which the professional developments took place as planned and what components or activities first and second-year teachers found to be beneficial. The second category of research questions seeks to understand the extent to which the two professional development experiences may constitute an appropriate system of support. These research questions seek to elucidate participants' perspective on the influence of specific components of the intervention on their own teacher self-efficacy beliefs, job satisfaction, and their intention to remain in their teaching role. Below I provide a brief rationale for each of these two overarching categories of research questions as well as the specific research questions.

Changes in teacher self-efficacy. As discussed in chapter one, beginning teachers are the most susceptible to low self-efficacy beliefs and are most likely to leave the teaching profession within the first few years of their teaching career (Brill & McCartney, 2008). All beginning teachers, regardless of sector or organization, participate in some form of traditional professional development from their school leaders or districts. The needs assessment for beginning teachers within the Uplift Education network of schools presented in chapter two found that some teachers believed that the weekly professional development opportunities offered by their school leaders or from the network were insufficient for their needs and did not yield any changes in their practice or improve their ability to deliver instruction or manage their workload. These teachers felt as if they were not being equipped with the resources or strategies to meet the needs of their students. Teachers that feel inept or as if they do not have the skillsets to meet the role expectations or the ability to meet the educational needs of their students report feelings of low self-efficacy regarding their teaching role (Yeo, Ang, Chong, Huan, & Quek, 2008). This is potentially due in part to the lack of structured professional learning communities and mentoring experiences (in-person and virtually) in these areas; which, research has shown, correlates with improved teacher self-efficacy beliefs when made available to them (Fulton & Britton, 2009; Mintzes, Marcum, Messerschmidt-Yates, & Mark, 2013; Nolan, 2009). Improved self-efficacy has been shown to be related to teachers' ability to meaningfully change their practices and manage their work (Pinchevsky & Bogler, 2014; Lumpe, Vaughn, Henrickson, & Bishop, 2014; Tscannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Zee & Kohman, 2016).

Given this information, the intervention hypothesized two components to better teacher self-efficacy, which in turn may help teachers improve in their instructional practice and

workload management. The first component, the virtual teacher roundtables, offered participants structured virtual professional learning community peer support around instructional delivery, workload management, and content knowledge development. The second component, the virtual office hours, provided participants with unstructured peer advocacy, through an e-mentoring-like experience where the course team leader offered synchronous advice, feedback, and support to early career teachers. The overarching intent of the research is to determine the extent to which these professional development experiences are related to improvements in self-efficacy as well as improved perceptions of teachers in their ability to improve their instructional practices and workload management.

Appropriate systems of support for early career teachers. As previously discussed, research findings (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bishop, 1992) suggest that there is a link between teacher self-efficacy beliefs and a teachers' investment in teaching. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to have higher levels of job satisfaction, and more likely to remain in their teaching role (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Participants in the needs assessment discussed in chapter two expressed the need for more instructional and workload management support. Teachers who were assigned mentors expressed their appreciation for having colleagues to help them get acclimated with the expectations of the schools' leadership, instructional delivery, and with content knowledge development. In the extant research literature around mentoring, there is a lack of research that explores the specific types of support offered by mentor teachers during their regular meetings with their mentees (e.g., how often they reviewed lesson planning or worked on instructional delivery), that are most beneficial to mentees' role development and have a positive influence on their efficacy beliefs.

The first set of research questions in this section are designed to examine and compare components of the professional development that are actually provided to beginning teachers as a result of their participation in the virtual learning communities and roundtables as implemented. I also seek to examine which elements of the professional development beginning teachers found most helpful in supporting their instructional and professional growth as well as those elements that teachers found least helpful or hardest to implement with fidelity. Specifically, I ask:

1. To what extent do teachers receive the professional development as planned?
Which components of the professional development are implemented with the least fidelity? The most?
2. What types of support that are provided by the professional development do teachers perceive as most beneficial to improving their practice? Least?

Data gathered to support these research questions will help determine the extent to which the two professional development activities were delivered to participants as intended, and which discrete elements of the two activities were believed to be most helpful. Further, these questions are intended to provide information that will be helpful in determining the specific types of support that may contribute to the improvement of teacher instructional pedagogy, workload management, and other role functions as perceived by themselves.

Given research suggests that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy tend to have high levels of job satisfaction and remain in their teaching role for more years than those teachers that have low-self efficacy (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Burley et al., 1991; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982). Specifically, I sought to determine if participation in the professional development experiences has an influence on teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction, as suggested by prior

research and by participant experiences on Uplift Education campuses, by asking the following research questions:

3. How do teachers describe their perceptions of how their self-efficacy changed as a result of their participation in the virtual teacher roundtables and office hour sessions?
4. To what extent do teachers report an increase in job satisfaction due to their ongoing participation in the virtual teacher roundtables and office hours?

Given the findings from the needs assessment and the research findings discussed in chapter three, I hypothesize that that participation in both mentoring programs and professional learning communities increase teachers' job satisfaction when they leverage both mastery experiences, verbal persuasion, and build collective efficacy (Brinson & Steiner, 2007; Hallam et al., 2012). These two research questions are intended to shed light on the extent to which these elements are operative among beginning teachers participating in the two professional development activities in the 2017-18 school year.

Finally, research has shown that teachers with high levels of job satisfaction are more likely to remain in their teaching assignments (Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015; Torres, 2016). Therefore, in the context of this study, it is crucial to learn if teachers attribute their participation in the intervention to their intention to remain in their teaching assignment. Definitively, I ask:

5. To what extent is participation in virtual roundtables and office hours related to changes in teachers' stated desire to return to their teaching assignment for SY 2018-2019?

Answers to this research question provide an opportunity for Uplift Education to determine if this type of support is an added value for working in the network of charter schools and if teachers perceive their participation in the intervention components as an asset when considering their decision to leave or remain in their teaching assignment. Further, and perhaps more importantly, this research question will potentially help me speak to the overarching question of whether these intervention components are worth continued implementation within the Uplift Network. I sought to determine whether teachers' stated positive intentions to remain in their role are concomitantly potentially related to decreased teacher attrition in the network.

Intervention Components

The virtual teacher roundtables lasted for 60 minutes and were facilitated by the CTL once a month. The virtual office hours took place three weeks out of each month. To ensure that participants took advantage of the support from the CTL and adhered to recommended teacher mentoring practices such as ensuring mentors have consistent opportunities to meet with mentees (Brondryk & Searby, 2013; Cordingly & Bucker, 2012; Mullen, 2012), teachers were required to attend at least one virtual office hour session per month. This section will describe the virtual teacher roundtable sessions and the virtual office hours.

Course team leader training. During the July 2017 training for the Course Team Leaders, each Curriculum Coordinator reviewed the rationale for the change in practice and platform for providing support to secondary teachers within the network. Table 3.1 shares the duration of the course team training (two hours) and that the Curriculum Coordinator reviewed the virtual roundtable and office hour protocols to be followed by the CTL. Both protocols are described below and in Appendix C. Lastly, during the training, the Curriculum Coordinators

reviewed the instructions for using Skype for Business and practiced using the platform (See Appendix D).

The virtual teacher roundtable protocol in Appendix C includes directions around what CTLs were supposed to do prior to, during, and after each session. For example, the protocol contains directions on how the CTLs were supposed to send the calendar invite to each of their assigned teachers that includes the topics to be discussed as well as attaching the agenda to the invite and uploading it to the Blackboard course site. Along with these expectations, CTLs were required to meet with their network Curriculum Coordinator prior to the virtual roundtable sessions to review the agenda and to role-play conversations as the Curriculum Coordinator and the CTL walked through the facilitation of the upcoming meeting. These meetings with the Curriculum Coordinator were intended to provide the CTL with coaching prior to their virtual roundtable session so that the CTL could effectively facilitate the hour -long virtual roundtable session. The protocol also included instructions on taking attendance, what topics were to be discussed during the session, and how the CTL would follow-up with attendance information and receive feedback from their Curriculum Coordinator following the session.

The virtual office hour protocol provided a similar level of detailed information regarding what the CTL was to do before, during, and after the office hour session. These sessions required participants to RSVP (although the session was to be held regardless of receipt of RSVP, just in case someone showed up without confirming their attendance). The protocol walked the CTL through establishing the office hour times in collaboration with their network peer teachers during the Collaboration Day held on August 3, 2017. It included instructions around the CTL's responsibilities, the requirement of emailing the cohort following the session

with topics discussed, and questions answered (without identifying information) so that others can have access to these answers whether they attended the session or not.

Table 4.1

Intervention Activities, Timeline, Duration, Description, and Example

Component	Timeline	Date	Duration	Description	Example
Course Team Leader Training	July 2017	Last Friday of the month	2 hours	CTL reviewed the virtual roundtable and office hour protocols and practice with the Skype for Business Platform	Curriculum Coordinator practiced using the online platform with CTL
Launch	August 2017	1 st Wednesday of the month of August	45 minutes	Teachers introduced to format of collaboration when meeting with CTL on Collaboration Day	Teachers asked questions about shift support and how to facilitate sessions
Virtual Roundtables	August 2017 – April 2018	4 th Wednesday of each month	60 minutes	All year one and year two high school teachers that teach were to meet (mandatory) via synchronous online sessions for virtual teacher roundtables Each session was facilitated by an assigned course team leader (peer teacher in the network with more than two years of experience)	CTL reviewed the upcoming unit of study CTL and teachers reviewed the common assessment CTL and peer teachers shared instructional strategies and

				Teachers discussed upcoming units, reviewed student work, and shared practices	discussed challenges
Office Hours	August 2017 – April 2018	Three 2-hour blocks of time during the first 3 weeks of the month	Varies depending on the needs of the participant	<p>First and second year secondary school teachers were required to attend office hours at least once a month</p> <p>Course Team Leaders held virtual office hours at least once a week for new and second year high school teachers</p> <p>Teacher had the opportunity to ask questions and get support from their Course Team Leader on any need that they may have</p>	Teachers attended a virtual office hour session to ask their assigned CTL questions regarding instructional techniques, content knowledge, and/or workload management support
Curriculum Coordinator Check-in with CTL	Monthly September 2017- April 2018	Varies depending on CTL schedule	1 hour	The Curriculum Coordinator reviewed feedback and CTL reflections from the virtual roundtable and office hour sessions. The Curriculum Coordinator provided guidance and support with setting the agenda and preparing the materials for the next month roundtable	Curriculum Coordinator provided guidance around setting up the virtual unit preview and thought through objections or questions about delivery and content of

Launch of the intervention. On the first Wednesday of August, referenced in Table 4.1, an introduction of the components of the intervention to early career and experienced teachers took place on each of the campuses. Each teacher attended the network Collaboration Day and attended a session facilitated by their CTL. The CTL reviewed the Virtual Teacher Roundtable Protocol and Virtual Office Hour Protocol (see Appendix C). The launch handout included the protocol and the instructions for logging onto Skype for Business (see Appendix D). Moreover, teachers received the schedule of the virtual teacher roundtables and collaborated with their CTL to arrange virtual office hour sessions. Then the appointment was sent to them via email and on Blackboard following the launch. Each campus leader presented the opportunity to sign-up for participation in this investigation to every teacher who met the criteria discussed in the next chapter. School leaders attempted to answer all questions and concerns and forwarded those concerns directly to a member of the research team.

Virtual teacher roundtables. The virtual teacher roundtables used the Skype for Business platform. Each CTL sent a calendar invitation and a reminder email using their network Outlook email account for the monthly virtual teacher roundtable. All virtual teacher roundtables included instructors that taught the same course in different schools across the network and included an assigned school leader (a Secondary Dean or Director). CTLs facilitated all the sessions, reviewed the upcoming unit and common assessment, shared resources and strategies, and opened up the session for dialogue to engage in group or individual problems solving. The sessions lasted 60 minutes each and took place on the fourth Wednesday of each month from August 2017 – April 2018 between 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm, as shared in Table

4.1. Following each session, the CTLs placed a link to the recording of the session on their respective courses' Blackboard site and include any resources shared during the virtual teacher roundtable session. Further, each CTL also had the responsibility to record the session minutes and take attendance for each virtual roundtable session via Google form provided to them by the respective network curriculum coordinator.

Virtual office hours. Similar to the virtual teacher roundtable platform, virtual office hours took place on the Skype for Business platform. Each week CTLs scheduled a two-hour block of time either before, during, or after the school day to make themselves available for teachers in the network that have questions about instruction, curriculum, workload management, or any other concern they need to address to improve or execute their role. These virtual office hours took place once a week for three weeks out of the month. Early career teachers (1st and 2nd-year teachers) were required to attend one office hour session per month. Recordings of each virtual office hour session are kept and stored by the content-specific Curriculum Coordinator. CTLs were to keep notes from each session and share them with the research team and their respective Curriculum Coordinators. CTLs were also to capture attendance and share this information with the campus Academic Directors and Deans.

Curriculum coordinator check-in with CTL. Every month following the virtual roundtable and office hour sessions, the Curriculum Coordinator analyzed the recordings of their respective roundtables and provided the CTL with feedback on the facilitation of the session (e.g., what went well, areas of opportunity). Curriculum Coordinators also reviewed the upcoming unit preview with the CTL and discussed how to integrate the feedback from the Curriculum Coordinator with the comments from school leaders and participants to enhance the next month's session. Dates and times of these meetings varied by CTL and Curriculum

Coordinator. The Curriculum Coordinator held the meeting on the CTL campus before the school day, during an instructional planning period, or after the school day.

Method

Given the context, purpose, and research questions outlined for this study, I used a mixed methods approach. Particularly, I used a convergent parallel design which allowed for the triangulation of findings from analyses of data collected via different methods. This method allowed me to validate and corroborate findings developed from each method and source of data (e.g., quantitative, qualitative) by triangulating them with findings from the other source/method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This section begins with a description of the research sample and recruitment of participants. I then discuss the convergent parallel design in more detail and discuss the specific quantitative and qualitative approaches that were used in the design of this study. This section then proceeds to a discussion about the data collection instruments used in the study, the specific measures derived from the data collected, and the analytic approaches that I used to address the research questions. It concludes with a discussion of the strengths and limitations of this design in general and specific to this study.

Participants and Sample

During the 2017-2018 school year, there were 274 first and second-year secondary teachers (grades 6 -12) who participated in the network-provided virtual learning communities and mentoring sessions. Each of these teachers worked in twenty-one middle schools and high schools in a public charter management organization in North Texas. These teachers constituted the population of teachers from which I recruited participants for this study.

Recruitment for the study took place in April 2018 via email prior to the last virtual teacher roundtable session that took place on April 25, 2018. All secondary teachers received an email asking if they would like to participate in the study. In the email, recruitment script teachers were asked if they would like to opt-in to be a part of the study. At that time, all teachers who agreed to participate in the study were asked to electronically sign a consent form documenting their agreement to participate in the evaluation of the virtual roundtable and office hour sessions that took place from August 2018 to April 2018. The organization's charter management director provided the research team a list with the respondents' years of experience and exact teaching assignments to cross-reference and ensure every teacher was eligible for this investigation. This information was kept by the study's research team and was used to craft the participants' section of the written report for the research investigation.

Research Design

To answer the study's research questions and the evaluation questions listed previously, it was necessary to use a convergent parallel design and a mixed methods design. The convergent parallel design allowed for the simultaneous usage of qualitative and quantitative research approaches during the same phase of the research process. Data from each type of research approach was collected independently and analyzed separately (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The purpose of this design was to allow for the triangulation of methods and to provide a comparison and contrast of quantitative data with qualitative findings for both validation and corroboration (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The use of the convergent parallel research design allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the potential influence virtual office hours and virtual teacher roundtables could have on teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and their intention to remain in their teaching

assignment. This mixed methods approach created the opportunity to glean astute insights from both quantitative and qualitative data and develop a deep understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Secondly, this research design allowed for an efficient and timely completion of the evaluation due to the nature of the concurrent implementations of the research approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This investigation included the use of semi-structured interviews and a post-intervention questionnaire to capture participants' perceptions of the virtual teacher roundtables and virtual office hours and if their participation in the virtual teacher roundtables had any influence on their self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and intention to remain in their teaching role. The interview protocol contained questions that are similar to the questionnaire items.

A quantitative research approach allows for the examination of the problem by the generation of numerical data or data that is transferable to usable statistics (Schutt, 2015). Quantitative research approaches allow researchers to quantify participant behaviors, attitudes, and other variables defined in the research investigation (Schutt, 2015). Further, it allows for researchers to uncover patterns (Schutt, 2015). Quantitative research approaches can include many methods for data collection, including, but not limited to, the use of surveys, audits/observations, and existing secondary data sets. For this investigation, I used a questionnaire to capture participant perceptions of their self-efficacy beliefs after participating in the virtual teacher roundtables and virtual office hours. Further, participants took a questionnaire at the end of April 2018 to learn more about their perceptions of the virtual teacher roundtable facilitation, influence on their self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and intent to remain in their teaching assignment.

To examine multiple layers of an existing problem the use of a qualitative research approach is beneficial (Creswell, 1998). Creswell (1998) suggests that a qualitative approach can play a vital role in data collection when the researcher can observe in the natural setting. Not only can the researcher find trends in the data, but they can also find meaning from experiences with the participants (Maxwell, 2005). In making a determination regarding what type of qualitative approach to take, I chose the use of semi-structured interviews to capture participants' perceptions of the components of the intervention that were most beneficial in supporting workload management, content knowledge development, as well as perceptions of support, and influence on self-efficacy. Face-to-face interviews allow for researchers to ascertain the following: (1) participant meaning of events; (2) contextual influences on those events; and (3) how the events took place (Maxwell, 2005). The interview protocol for the intervention contained questions that were similar to the questionnaire items. However, the open-ended questions allowed for participants to elaborate on their perceptions of the intervention components' influence on self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and the desire to remain in their teaching role for the following school year.

Data Collection Instruments and Measures

Given the mixed methods design described above, I utilized one primary data collection instrument that I describe in more detail below. Within the discussion of the instrument I describe the measures that were derived from the instrument and specify how they were used in the study.

Teacher surveys. I developed a teacher survey in order to determine teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of the benefits of participating in the professional development activities. The survey was used to determine teachers' overall satisfaction with the professional

development activities as well as specific elements of those activities that they found to be most helpful in their instructional practice development, efficacy changes, and providing support. I describe the survey and the measures derived below.

Virtual roundtable and office hour evaluation survey. I developed an evaluation survey that used items adapted from the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) tool (see Appendix F) to assess the extent to which teachers were satisfied with the professional development experiences and to gather information on the specific elements they found most useful. This instrument assessed participants' perceptions of the quality, satisfaction, and influence of the virtual roundtables and office hours on their self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and intention to remain in their teaching assignment for the following year.

The *general self-efficacy of participating* subscale was derived from two items from the BTIM that asked teachers to respond to the following general prompts: "To what extent did your content team leader help you to improve your self-efficacy?"; and "My virtual roundtable experience improved my teaching effectiveness." Teacher responses were captured on a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (not much benefit) to 5 (a great deal of benefit). Previous research has demonstrated that these questions have good reliability ($\alpha = .77$ as reported by ICF International, 2009).

I assessed specific benefits of the virtual roundtables through a set of four questions. Specifically, the items asked were: "To what extent have you gained new ideas about how to improve the way you teach?"; "To what extent have you gained new perspectives on your strengths and weaknesses in teaching?"; "To what extent have you gained a new outlet for expressing and sharing frustrations, concerns, and problems with teaching?"; and "To what extent have you gained a stronger sense of connections or support from other teachers?" Teacher

responses will be captured on a 5-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (not much benefit) to 5 (a great deal of benefit).

In order to examine teachers' perceptions of the quality and effectiveness of the office hours with respect to their relationship with their content team leader, the questions included: "I feel comfortable bringing difficult teaching problems to my content team leader"; "My content team leader assists with instructional techniques"; and "My content team leader provides emotional support." Teachers were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Participants were also asked about their perceptions of the two professional development experiences in relation to their overall job satisfaction. Particularly, teachers were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following item: "Significantly increased my overall job satisfaction." Responses were captured using a 5-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal).

Finally, the survey gauged participants' *intention to return* to teaching the next school year by asking the question: "How much has your content team leader influenced your decision to remain teaching?" Responses were captured using a 5-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal). Lastly, the survey also asked a yes/no question to determine if they "will return to [their] teaching assignment during the 2018-2019 school year."

Implementation fidelity. I developed measures of implementation fidelity to gain more perspective on the extent of delivery and reception of the professional development activities as designed by the network. CTLs hosted 60-minute monthly virtual roundtables using a preset agenda as planned. The CTLs were also required to offer office hours once a week for year one and year two secondary teachers. Further, as mentioned earlier, part of the requirements for all

first and second-year secondary teachers included attending the monthly virtual roundtables and one office hour session per month. These elements form the basis of my measure of fidelity for the professional development activities which I describe below.

High fidelity, with regards to CTL facilitation of the virtual roundtables, required facilitating 100% of the virtual roundtables using the standard agenda which included a session evaluation in which all teachers reported direct support around workload management and content area support during the sessions. Correspondingly, in the context of teacher attendance of the virtual roundtables, high fidelity required all first and second-year secondary teachers to attend one virtual roundtable and participate in one virtual office hour session each month (totaling eight virtual roundtables and eight virtual office hour sessions). Low fidelity regarding CTL facilitation would mean that less than 75% of virtual roundtable sessions facilitated would use the preset agenda, and less than 75% of participants reported receiving direct support around workload management and content area needs during the sessions. An attendance rate of less than 75% by secondary teachers for the virtual roundtables would yield low fidelity.

The collection of participant attendance for each component of the intervention took place during each monthly session. Each virtual teacher roundtable used a standard agenda that is co-created by the CTL and the network content-specific Curriculum Coordinators. Contrarily, the virtual office hours were not scripted or preplanned. Instead, they used an open format where the early career teacher was welcome to ask any question that he or she may have for the CTL.

From the theory of treatment model (located in Appendix H), I created discrete measures of fidelity by dividing each component of the professional development activities into subcomponents (see Table 4.2). These subcomponents serve as connection between the constructs in the theory of treatment model and the details of implementation fidelity for the

intervention (Nelson et al., 2012). I provide a narrative discussion of each element in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2

Data Collection Matrix

Fidelity Indicator	Data Source(s)	Data Collection Tool	Frequency	Responsibility
Virtual Roundtable Attendance	Attendance records for each roundtable	Virtual roundtable attendance sheet (Via Google Doc)	Monthly	Course Team Leader
Office Hours Attendance	Attendance records for office hours	Office hour attendance sheet (Via Google Doc)	Weekly	Course Team Leader
Virtual Roundtable Agenda Adherence	Minutes from Virtual Roundtable Recordings of Virtual Roundtables	Minutes/Agenda Checklist	Monthly	Course Team Leader, Research Team Member, and School Leader
Quality of Delivery of Virtual Roundtable	Teacher participant quality ratings of sessions	Participant Survey	Once (May 2018)	Research Team Member

Virtual roundtable attendance. Using the guidance offered by Dusenbury et al. (2003) to measure the fidelity of implementation, the dosage is a reliable indicator of fidelity of implementation for the intervention. Diligently documenting attendance confirmed if participants engaged in the virtual roundtable component of the intervention outlined in the theory of treatment and logic models. At the conclusion of the intervention, participant attendance records were reviewed to establish how many virtual roundtables each participant

attended and determine the “Virtual Roundtable Attendance” indicator outlined above in Table 4.2. As outlined in Table 4.2, the CTL took participant attendance at the end of each monthly session and submitted it electronically (via Google Doc). Only the researcher was able to view this log. Making determinations regarding the dose (quantity) of support given to participants provided insight into the process but allowed for the researcher to connect facets of the components of the intervention to the expected outcomes outlined in the theory of treatment in Appendix H (Dusenbury et al., 2003).

Office hour attendance. The theory of treatment in Appendix A indicates that CTL offered monthly office hours. The logic model in Appendix I indicates that participants were required to attend office hour sessions once a month. Participants had a choice of when they would like to attend monthly office hours. Table 4.2 outlines that CTLs kept a weekly attendance log (via Google Doc) to keep track of attendees. Participant attendance records collected at the conclusion of the intervention provided the data needed for the “Office Hour Attendance” indicator outlined above in Table 4.2. CTLs took attendance during the session once a participant signed in online. As indicated in Table 4.2, the attendance log submitted electronically at the end of each session (via Google Doc) was only accessible to the researcher. Similar to the rationale provided about the “Virtual Roundtable Attendance,” having information at the end of the intervention regarding the dose (quantity) of support provided to participants allowed me to make connections between process and outcomes of the intervention.

Virtual roundtable agenda adherence. Monitoring CTL usage of the standard agenda developed by the researcher for the intervention conceptualizes program adherence for the intervention per the guidelines established by Nelson et al., (2012). The assigned school leader took and submitted minutes for each virtual roundtable session. The minutes entered into the

Google Doc were viewable only by the researcher at the end of each session. CTLs recorded each virtual roundtable session while the lead researcher reviewed the minutes and recordings of each session using an agenda adherence checklist. The assessment of minutes and recordings would have allowed the researcher to make a binary (yes/no) determination at the conclusion of each monthly session to confirm if the CTL adhered to the preset agenda. The lead researcher captures the “Virtual Roundtable Agenda Adherence” indicator in Table 4.2 at the end of the intervention by tallying up the number of times the CTL adhered to the preset agenda for the entire nine-month series of virtual roundtables. Collecting information about the use of the preset agenda as an indicator not only allowed for the researcher to evaluate adherence to the requirements outlined in the logic model in Appendix B, but it had the potential to connect the process to the expected outcomes at the conclusion of the investigation described in the theory of treatment in Appendix H.

Quality of delivery of virtual roundtable. Nelson et al. (2012) says that it is important to measure the quality of the activities of a program to gain a better understanding of the desired subcomponents of a particular intervention. To provide more insight into the quality of the facilitation of the virtual roundtables for the intervention, the “Quality of Delivery of Virtual Roundtables” indicator located in Table 4.2 is comprised of the ratings that participants gave on a survey at the end of the intervention (April 2018) regarding the extent to which the activities within the virtual roundtable session have met their expectations. This indicator aligns with the mediating variables included in the theory of treatment model in Appendix H. Participants’ ratings will shed light on whether or not items learned and shared during the virtual roundtable provide teachers with the workload and content-specific support they require.

Teacher interviews. Between April and May of 2018, selected teacher participants interviewed individually at the school sites using the interview questions located in Appendix G. Researchers requested interviews from the participants who took the evaluation survey and subsequently selected thirty-two eligible teachers that indicated their willingness to take part in the interviews. However, only twenty respondents set up a formal interview. The virtual roundtable and office hours evaluation survey questions provided a starting point for the generation of questions for the interview portion of the investigation. I used a stratified purposive sampling technique that allowed for participants from across content areas and across grade levels to share their experiences from their participation in the virtual teacher roundtables and virtual office hours. This allowed me to discover and later describe characteristics across similar and different subgroups (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). A member of the network Talent Management team divided the first and second-year teachers that agreed to participate in the study into subgroups; first by grade level cluster (e.g., middle school or high school), then by content area. Next, the Talent Management team member randomly assigned each teacher within a content area a number and used a lottery (a box with pieces of paper that include the numbers assigned to each teacher within the content area) to select the interview participant. The Talent Management team member repeated this process a total of thirty-two times until four teachers per content area and eight teachers per grade level cluster were selected. I planned on interviewing a total of sixteen middle school teachers and sixteen high school teachers from each content area (math, science, English, and humanities). Interviews took approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The transcription from each interview were uploaded using DeDoose software for analysis.

Virtual roundtable session recordings and notes. The respective Blackboard site of each course housed all the recordings of the virtual teacher roundtables and virtual office hours sessions which were available using a link. Researchers had access to all the recordings and CTL notes (the Secondary Director of Curriculum sent this link every month). Field notes were then captured by analyzing the CTL notes and session recordings from select sessions to assess if the CTL adhered to the virtual roundtable agenda. The researcher was to use an agenda checklist provided by the network Teaching and Learning Team and make note of the sessions' adherence to the preset agenda (See Appendix M).

Analytic Approaches

Using a mixed methods design to evaluate the intervention requires that I recorded both qualitative and quantitative data captured using a variety of instruments. The analysis of qualitative and quantitative data is necessary to assess the outcomes of the intervention (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This section describes the data analysis techniques by research question.

Approaches to research question one. To make a determination about the facilitation of the sessions using the preset agenda, I intended to review the qualitative data gathered from the coding of observational data from each of the recorded sessions and session minutes captured by the CTL. Secondly, survey respondents were asked to indicate how often different types of support were offered during the components of the intervention on the virtual roundtable and office hour evaluation. I used descriptive statistics and compared the frequency of each type of support assessed on the survey to determine the types of support offered during the components of the intervention and compared that information to the preset agenda to see if all of the pre-identified types of support were offered during the virtual roundtable sessions.

Approaches to research question two. During the semi-structured interview portion of this investigation, I asked participants to share the type of support they received during the virtual teacher roundtables and Office Hour Evaluation Participant Survey. This allowed me to answer the research question regarding the type of support participants received during both of the intervention components. I used pre-determined codes, such as workload management and instructional delivery, and emerging codes to capture the types of support offered by the CTL during the virtual office hours as well as from both the CTL and their peers during the virtual teacher roundtables. I used these codes to determine themes in different types of support. In addition, I compared these themes to see if they were complementary to the quantitative data set from the Virtual Roundtable and Office Hour Evaluation Participant Survey, where participants indicated if certain types of support were offered during the virtual teacher roundtable and virtual office hour sessions (e.g., instructional strategies, activities, workload management, feedback on plans or lesson components).

Approach to research question three and four. On the Virtual Roundtable and Office Hour Evaluation Participant Survey, respondents were asked if they attributed their participation in both of the intervention components to their self-efficacy beliefs and job satisfaction. These questions required participants to rate the influence of the intervention on their self-efficacy beliefs and job satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale. I calculated the frequency of respondents' answers to learn more about teachers' perceptions of the influence of their participation in the intervention on both their self-efficacy beliefs and job satisfaction. Unfortunately, I was not able to use means to determine statistical significance of participation in the intervention and their attribution of self-efficacy beliefs and job satisfaction, due to the fact that there was not a control group for this study. Having a control group would have allowed participants and non-

participant mean scores to be compared to determine if there is a causal relationship between participation in the intervention and teacher self-efficacy beliefs and job satisfaction. However, capturing teacher perceptions on open-ended interview questions regarding if they attributed their participation in the intervention components to their self-efficacy beliefs and job satisfaction would have allowed me to provide more context around how their participation has influenced their self-efficacy beliefs and job satisfaction. Moreover, I would be able to better understand why they may or may not attribute their self-efficacy beliefs and job satisfaction to participation in the intervention. I used the pre-identified codes from Bandura's (1977), self-efficacy research, mastery experiences, and verbal persuasion to group participants' responses from interviews regarding teacher self-efficacy beliefs. I used the pre-determined codes used in Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, more specifically, beliefs, environment, and behavior regarding participant attribution of job satisfaction to participation in the intervention. I also used emerging codes that come from reviewing the audio recordings and written transcripts during the coding process. Both the quantitative and qualitative information gathered was helpful in providing specifics to the Uplift Education administrators regarding the types of support that participants received during the intervention that may contribute to teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and job satisfaction.

Approach to research question five. Finally, I collected teacher attrition rates for the 2017-2018 school year from the Talent Management Department at the end of the school year (June 2018) so that I can compare teachers' intentions to remain in their teaching assignments as indicated on the end-of-year questionnaire to the actual teacher attrition rates for early career teachers. I believe this comparison is necessary, not only for me to have accurate descriptive data regarding teacher attrition rates for the early career teachers, but to also identify any

differences in what teachers reported on the survey and their actual decision to remain in their teaching assignment for the next school year.

Qualitative data coding. For this investigation there are two sources of qualitative data: participant interview transcripts and CTL notes from virtual teacher roundtables and virtual office hour sessions. I listened to each of the interviews prior to transcription per the suggestion from Maxwell (2008). I took notes during this time so that I could begin to consider themes, relationship, and alignment to pre-determined codes. Using the recordings and notes from each of the interviews and the CTL notes allowed me to use both pre-determined codes and emerging codes to analyze the information gathered from both qualitative data sets. Those codes proved to be helpful in the analysis process in that they allowed for the creation of emerging sub-codes aligned to the pre-identified codes. The construction of a qualitative codebook is necessary to organize the potentially large amount of data gathered during this investigation. The codebook located in Appendix ? was a necessary component of the analysis for the evaluation of the intervention in that it provided information that will develop a general theory of “what’s going on” (Maxwell, 2008, p. 97). After identifying a few themes and using categories, I interpreted the data by answering the research questions referenced above.

Limitations

The one group posttest research design used for the evaluation of the intervention makes it difficult to know if a change has occurred due to the multiple threats to validity (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). The one group posttest is used when there is no control group or pretest after a group has received a treatment or participates in an intervention (Creswell & Cresswell, 2017; Shaddish et al., 2002). The absence of a pretest and a no-treatment control group makes it difficult to know if the results occurred due to the participation in the intervention

(Shadish et al., 2002). The pretest-posttest design is a slight improvement over the one group posttest design in that it may provide information, albeit weak, regarding the change that may have occurred within participants had they not taken part in the intervention (Shadish et al., 2002). However, due to unforeseen challenges I was unable to complete a pretest with the participant group. The one group posttest design is subject to confounding variables and has several threats to internal validity such as maturation, regression, test effects, and history (Creswell & Creswell 2017; Shadish et al., 2002).

The nonequivalent comparison group design that uses pretest and posttest would be more effective at examining threats to validity in that the pretest allows for the researcher to gain an understanding of group differences that may be correlated with the outcome (Shadish et al., 2002). Unfortunately, due to the network's desire to implement the intervention for the entire network and require each secondary teacher to participate in certain components of the evaluation (all secondary teachers participate in the virtual teacher roundtables), a control group could not be used for this investigation. Further, from an ethical perspective, offering some new teachers support and not others may not be seen as favorable by district and school administrators as well as teachers within the network of schools.

In one group posttest design as described above, improvements observed after the intervention are typically ascribed to components or the intervention as a whole and used to describe a causal relationship without acknowledging the contributions of other variables to the study's outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Shadish et al., 2002). For instance, in the case of this particular investigation, teacher perceptions of self-efficacy may improve over time due to other factors such as coaching from an instructional coach, support from an external mentor through an alternative certification program (e.g., TFA, Urban Teachers) attending external

professional development, or gaining more experience in the role during their first and second years of teaching (Henson, 2001). This normal maturation is a threat to the internal validity of this investigation if teachers often have some improved perception of self-efficacy over the course of the school year (Henson, 2001). However, even with the limitations of the selected research design to make causal inferences regarding the participation in the intervention on the dependent variables, information from teacher surveys and interviews can provide insight into what types of support teachers find most helpful during the early years of their career.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined my evaluation design, data collection instruments and measures, and analytic approaches that were used for this study. It provides a review of the mixed methods approach taken to collect and analyze the intervention data captured by both quantitative and qualitative means. The research questions presented in this chapter provided a guide for decision making regarding the research design, data collection, and analysis in an attempt to assess if participation in the intervention components influenced early career teacher self-efficacy beliefs, job satisfaction, and their intention to remain in their teaching assignment.

While the evaluation design in this chapter has certain specific limitations as described above, it is not intended to provide a comprehensive analysis of all of the factors that may affect teacher perceptions of self-efficacy or to determine causal relationships between participation in the professional development activities. It is intended, however, to provide enough information about the conduct of the professional development activities and the potential relationships between those activities and beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and feelings of support from the Uplift Education. Findings from this study will provide helpful guidance to the network in determining if these activities were sufficiently successful to warrant their continued

use in the network to support beginning teachers and provide information that could potentially be useful in further developing these activities for use in future school years with other beginning teachers.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

The intent of this chapter is to evaluate the potential influence that participation in both virtual teacher roundtables and virtual office hours has on early career teachers' attribution of changes in their self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and intention to remain in their teaching assignment. In chapter four, I provided an overview of the design of the research study and the intervention components. In this chapter I share the findings for each research question (RQ) examined in this study. As posed in chapter four, the five research questions below provide focus for the analysis within this study:

RQ1: To what extent do teachers receive the professional development as planned?
Which components of the professional development are implemented with the most fidelity? The least?

RQ2: Which supports that are provided by the professional development do teachers perceive as most beneficial to improving their practice? Least?

RQ3: How has teacher perceptions of self-efficacy changed as a result of their participation in the virtual teacher roundtables and office hour sessions?

RQ4: To what extent do teachers report an increase in job satisfaction due to their ongoing participation in the virtual teacher roundtables and office hours?

RQ 5: To what extent is participation in virtual roundtables and office hours related to changes in teachers' stated desire to return to their teaching assignment for SY 2018-2019?

Intervention Implementation

The sections below include information about the professional development implementation within the charter network of schools. The sections include information

regarding the training provided to CTLs, virtual office hour and virtual roundtable implementation information, and some demographic information regarding the study's survey respondents and interview participants.

Survey Respondent and Interview Participant Demographic Information

This section reviews the demographic information evaluation survey respondents and the interview participants. In reviewing this information, it is my aim to share in which ways the demographics of the survey respondents and interview participants mirror or differ from the network's first and second-year secondary teacher population. Ninety of the 274 first and second-year secondary teachers at Uplift Education identified at the outset of the study responded and consented to answering the questions included in the intervention evaluation survey resulting in a response rate of 47.3%. Each of the eligible participants were sent an email invitation to complete the intervention evaluation survey on April 25, 2018 and four separate reminder emails were sent for those who had not responded prior to May 25, 2018. There were two respondents that did not provide any demographic information on the survey. Table 5.1 also provides demographic information of survey respondent, and interview participants. The third column of Table 5.1 provides demographic information for all 1st and 2nd year teachers in the Uplift Education network. As shown in Table 5.1, compared to the network, both survey respondents and interview participants were more likely to be female (76.1% and 70% respectively compared to 63.5% for the network). The distribution of race/ethnicity of survey respondents closely resembles that of the network. However, interview participants were more likely to be White and Asian non-Hispanic and less likely to be Black non-Hispanic than the network.

As indicated in Table 5.1, of the 88 survey respondents 34 taught middle school (38.6%) and 54 taught high school (61.4%). Similar, as shown on Table 5.1, participant rates in the interview portion of the study were observed for both middle school (40%) and high school (60%). However, both the middle school rates of survey respondents and interviewees were less than the percentage of first and second-year teachers in the network (48.6%). When considering the percentage of high school teacher survey respondents (61.4%) and interview participants (60.0%), both rates were similar, however, they are higher than the percentage of first and second-year teachers in the network (51.1%). This means that a participant in this study was more likely to be a first or second-year high school teacher than a middle school teacher.

Table 5.1

Survey Respondent and Interview Participant Demographic Information

	Survey Respondents % (n)	Interview Participants %(n)	Uplift Education 1 st and 2 nd Year Teacher Population % (n)
Sex			
Male	23.9 (21)	30.0 (6)	36.5 (100)
Female	76.1 (67)	70 (14)	63.5 (174)
Non-respondents	2.2 (2)	-	-
Race/Ethnicity			
White (Non-Hispanic)	45.5 (40)	60.0 (12)	45.3 (124)
White (Hispanic)	14.8 (13)	10.0 (2)	16.1 (44)

Black (Non-Hispanic)	31.8 (28)	20.0 (4)	27.0 (74)
Black (Hispanic)	1.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.4 (1)
Asian (Non-Hispanic)	5.7 (5)	10.0 (2)	7.1 (20)
Asian (Hispanic)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	.3 (1)
American Indian (Non-Hispanic)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.5 (4)
American Indian (Hispanic)	1.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	1.5 (4)
Other	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.7 (2)
Non-respondents	2.2 (2)	-	-
<hr/> School Division <hr/>			
Middle School	38.6 (34)	40.0 (8)	48.9 (134)
High School	61.4 (54)	60.0 (12)	51.1 (140)
Non-respondents	2.2 (2)	-	-
<hr/> Teaching Experience <hr/>			
1 st Year	55.6 (49)	30.0 (6)	55.5 (152)
2 nd Year	44.3 (39)	70.0 (14)	44.5 (122)
Non-respondents	2.2 (2)	-	-

Content Area			
English	22.7 (20)	15.0 (3)	21.2 (58)
Math	15.9 (14)	20.0 (4)	17.9 (49)
Humanities	9.1 (8)	10.0 (2)	14.6 (40)
Science	21.6 (19)	15.0 (3)	14.2 (39)
Spanish	5.7 (5)	10.0 (2)	12.4 (34)
Fine Arts	11.4 (10)	10.0 (2)	7.3 (20)
Physical Education	3.4 (3)	10.0 (2)	4.4 (12)
Career and Technical Education	10.2 (9)	10.0 (2)	8.0 (22)
Non-respondents	2.2 (2)	-	-

The distribution of English and Physical Education teachers that responded to the survey was similar to that of the network (22.7% and 3.4% respectively, as compared to the network 21.2% and 4.4%). However, the distribution of English teachers that participated in the interview (15%) was less than both that of survey respondents and the first and second-year teachers in the network. Contrarily, the distribution on Physical Education teachers that participated in the interview (10%) was more than twice as high as the distribution of both the survey respondents and that of the first and second-year teachers in the network. For both Humanities and Spanish, the distribution of teachers for both the survey respondents and interview participation was lower than that of first and second-year teachers in the network (see Table 5.1). The opposite trend is

observable in Table 5.1 for Fine Arts and Career and Technical Education. The distribution of survey respondents and interview participants was lower than that of first and second-year teachers in the network. In Mathematics, the distribution of survey respondents was 15.9% which is less than that of first and second-year teachers (17.9%). The distribution of mathematics teacher participation in the interview portion of the study was 20% which is more than the distribution of first and second-year teachers in the network (See Table 5.1). For Science, the distribution of survey respondents (21.6%) was more than that of the network's population of first and second-year teachers (14.2%); while the number interview participants (15.0%) was only slightly more than that of the network's first and second-year secondary teachers (See Table 5.1).

Course Team Leaders (CTL) Training for Virtual Roundtable and Office Hour Facilitation

On June 9, 2017, the network CTLs attended a training hosted by the network Curriculum Coordinators to review the rationale for the change in practice that would now require the CTL to host monthly virtual office hours and virtual teacher roundtables. During the training, the CTLs were introduced to the Skype for Business online platform that they would use to host the monthly virtual sessions. Further, the training session included the following: a. guidance on crafting the agenda for each session; b. guidelines for capturing attendance; c. requirements around recording expectations for each session; and d. meeting expectations and deadlines for pre and post virtual roundtable session with their assigned network curriculum coordinator. CTLs held a training and practice session for their assigned teachers on July 30, 2017, so that teachers could become familiar with the technology and work out any technology challenges prior to the first session held on August 30, 2017.

Virtual Office Hours

As described in chapter four, first and second-year teachers were required to attend virtual office hours so that they could receive individualized support from their CTL. The CTL held their open office hours on August 16, 2017, August 23, 2017, and September 6, 2017. Over the course of those three dates only eight out of the one-hundred and three first and second year teachers attended the office hour sessions across all schools in the network (S. Rubenfeld, personal communication, September 10, 2017). Per the directive of Stefani Rubenfeld, the Uplift Education Director of Secondary Curriculum, the virtual office hours were discontinued due to low attendance, the lack of support from school leaders to ensure that first and second-year school teachers attend each of the office hour sessions, and CTL complaints about feeling as if they were wasting their time (S. Rubenfeld, personal communication, September 10, 2017). This decision was made in consultation with the Senior Director of Curriculum for the network. I was not consulted nor included in making this decision as my role in the organization is not directly connected to the curriculum department of the Teaching and Learning Team. This sudden discontinuation of the virtual office hours by the network's Teaching and Learning Team made it impossible for me to evaluate the implementation or gain respondents' perspectives of the virtual office hours as an element of study in this dissertation. Further, the suspension of the virtual office hours did not allow me to observe nor provide any insights in the latter part of the chapter regarding respondents' perception of the support or types of assistance the CTLs provide during virtual office hours and what supports that they may find beneficial in the one-on-one virtual setting.

Virtual Teacher Roundtables

Virtual Teacher Roundtables took place on the fourth Wednesday of the month from August to April, except for the month of December.² Virtual Teacher Roundtables were held for

43 secondary courses in the following content areas: a. English; b. Mathematics; c. Spanish; d. Humanities, e. Science, f. Career and Technical; g. Fine Arts; and h. Physical Education. School leaders advised teachers who taught multiple courses which virtual roundtable sessions to attend. The network-wide teacher collaboration day held at the beginning of the year on July 30, 2017, informed one hundred three first and second-year teachers of the requirement to attend each virtual roundtable session. Table 5.2 provides respondents' self-reports on the number of virtual roundtables that they attended throughout the school year.

Table 5.2

Respondents' Self-Reports of Virtual Roundtable Participation

Frequency	n	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	0	0	0
2	2	2.3	2.3
3	4	4.5	6.8
4	20	22.7	29.5
5	13	14.8	44.3
6	14	15.9	60.2
7	18	20.5	80.7
8	17	19.3	100
Total	88	100	

Note. Responses are from the Virtual Teacher Roundtable Evaluation Survey.

Table 5.2 indicates that of the 88 evaluation survey respondents, over 60% attended six or more virtual roundtable sessions and a little over 37% attended four or five sessions. School leaders from both high school and middle school campuses attended self-assigned virtual roundtable sessions. There does not exist a pattern of attendance and non-respondents. Non-responders on survey questions varied across all respondent self-reported attendance levels.

However, some CTLs reported that campus leader attendance was inconsistent and difficult to track because they would not log on at the start of a session and would leave shortly after arriving in the middle of some virtual teacher roundtable sessions (S. Rubenfeld, personal communication, April 25, 2018).

Agenda Adherence and Quality of Support Provided During the Virtual Roundtables

As embodied by the first research question, it is important to understand the extent to which the virtual roundtable sessions, as implemented, adhered to the pre-planned activities. The virtual roundtable activities were intended to support new teachers with instructional design, delivery, and improve their ability to manage their workload. Each virtual roundtable session was to include opportunities for teachers to preview upcoming assessments, review unit plan and lesson plan components, and the sharing of effective workload management and instructional strategies. Each session should have also included an unstructured period for teachers to ask questions.

As mentioned in chapter four, to gather information regarding agenda adherence for this investigation, each of the recordings of the virtual roundtables and session minutes were to be reviewed using the agenda adherence tool located in Appendix M. Out of the eight possible virtual roundtable sessions, only three out of the eight summaries for virtual roundtable meeting dates were received from the Secondary Director of Curriculum (September 30, 2017, November 29, 2017, and January 31, 2018) and only 16 CTLs included the links for each of the virtual roundtable sessions on their Blackboard sites. Despite attempts to obtain the session minutes, attendance, and recording information via email to the Secondary Director of Curriculum (emails sent on four separate occasions, once in October, and on four separate occasions between the months of February through May), I did not receive access to the Google form information or the

summary document that included the minutes for each of the virtual roundtable sessions. For the other 27 virtual roundtable sessions, links to the recordings were either unavailable on the site or I could not gain access to this information (e.g., some CTLs emailed links of recordings to roundtable participants). I was unable to gather this information for the majority of the virtual roundtable sessions and subsequently did not conduct any analysis as initially intended from the recorded sessions and minutes. In the following section I discuss the extent to which respondents reported that the virtual roundtable sessions focused on these core elements.

Support Provided During the Virtual Roundtable

As mentioned above, instructional strategy sharing, workload management support, and curricular planning (e.g., lesson planning, creating assessments) were activities that were to take place during each virtual teacher roundtable sessions. According to respondent survey ratings, there was inconsistent adherence to the pre-set virtual roundtable agenda. Two-thirds of survey respondents (67.8%) indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the sharing of successful strategies took place during the virtual teacher roundtable sessions (see Table 5.3). Less than half of the survey respondents (44.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had an opportunity to review and design new materials, lessons, or assessments for students during the virtual roundtable sessions (see Table 5.3). Less than a quarter (23%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that during their virtual roundtable session their CTL supplied them with specific workload management support and advice (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3

Frequency of Participant Ratings of Virtual Roundtable Activities

	1 (disagree)	2	3	4	5 (strongly agree)	NR
Reviewing and designing new materials, lessons, or assessments for students	9.2 (8)	20.7 (18)	25.3 (22)	34.5 (30)	10.3 (9)	1.1 (1)
Sharing successful strategies that teachers can use	2.3 (2)	12.7 (11)	17.2 (15)	41.4 (36)	26.4 (23)	1.1 (1)
Provide specific workload management support and advice	18.4 (16)	29.9 (26)	28.7 (25)	13.8 (12)	9.2 (8)	1.1 (1)

Note. Responses are from the Virtual Teacher Roundtable Evaluation Survey.

The qualitative data obtained through the interviews provided more detail with regards to the types of instructional strategies shared, examples of planning activities teachers participated in, and workload management support offered during the virtual roundtable sessions. During the interview portion of this study, respondents were asked what types of activities took place during the virtual roundtable sessions. Thirteen out of twenty interview participants shared that during the virtual roundtable sessions, teachers were able to share planning and instructional strategies. A high school English teacher (HS Eng. 2) shared that:

There were some things that I brought to the table...like I did a data tracker for doing a mock EOC, and everyone was like, ‘Ah, I would love to have that to use with my students.’ And so, I put that out there, at the appropriate time, and I sent it to everybody.

Similarly, a Middle School Science Teacher (MS Sci. 1) expressed that during her virtual roundtable sessions, “we share a lot of ideas, and so because we shared what each other were doing in each other's classes, it would change what I was planning on doing for my lesson.” A

High School Spanish Teacher (HS Span 2) reported that she knew that she found value in sharing strategies because they informed her practice:

Because I was able to get a very useful strategy from one of the first virtual roundtable sessions. Within the first couple of months I used it in all of my classes to try to promote reading in Spanish 2. And it really did work. It helped kids get through those texts and identify cognates, so it's gonna actually help them with their English learning as well.

However, the remaining seven interview participants reported that the CTL reviewed the upcoming units and the assessments for the duration of the virtual roundtable sessions which did not allow time for teachers to share strategies or to collaboratively plan lessons or design assessments. A high school English teacher (HS Eng. 1) shared that there was not any time during the virtual roundtable to share strategies and “if there would have been more time to prepare pre-work [participants would have] come prepared with something, then everybody would have something to talk about.”

The same acknowledgment of opportunities to engage in creating new lessons or assessment did not bear out in the interview portion of this investigation. During her interview, the same high school English teacher referenced above (HS Eng. 2) described that during the virtual roundtable sessions she got a chance to “look at a lesson a different way, or how scholars might answer questions or even [opportunities for] pre-planning questions for a lesson.”

However, most of the other interview participants reported that they did not engage in curricular planning and the sharing of instructional strategies. Six of the interview participants shared that their CTL spent time reviewing the curricular materials and did not include time for participants to plan collaboratively and share instructional strategies.

The data gathered from interviews painted a slightly different picture from the survey data mentioned above regarding whether the virtual teacher roundtable sessions provided teachers with workload support and advice. From the interviews, 11 out of the 20 respondents mentioned that their CTL offered specific guidance on how to manage their workload during the virtual roundtable sessions. A high school Career and Technical Education teacher (HS CTE 1) said that his CTL:

Did discuss quite a bit [of workload management], again because we're approaching the DP [Diploma Program], and so a lot of people are expressing a feeling of anxiety around the workload that's coming down the trail. And so our [CTL] had some coping strategies and time management strategies to offer us.

For context, nine of the ten high schools in the network were recently authorized to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. During the authorization process, each 11th and 12th grade teacher in six of the eight content areas had to create their own course outline that was in adherence with the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. Each course outline was approved by an external reviewer and was a critical component of each campus being granted authorization to offer the program to their students for the 2018-2019 school year. The preparation of these curricular plans required additional work outside of the school day and added to teacher workloads.

A high school math teacher (HS Math 1) shared how her CTL provided advice around what to do when you are no longer working on pace with tasks outlined in the network scope and sequence:

For instance, yesterday, our content team leader mentioned the probability project and how it was going with her class, and she made some suggestions, because they're in the

middle of doing the project that would help the teacher who hadn't started the project, to better manage their time once they started. She also asked, "Do you feel like you have enough time?" And some teachers said they didn't have enough time to actually start the project that they needed to get in a review or for all the concepts, or just to re-teach things that they thought were gonna be important for Algebra, too. So, there's been discussions about managing the scholars at your school and what you think they need, as opposed to just trying to stay on pace with everybody as best as you can kind of thing.

From the high school career and technical education teacher and math teachers' responses, it can be surmised that workload management support can come in more than one form. Some CTLs provided strategies on how to leverage time management strategies and to divide the work into doable chunks, in order to get back on pace with the outlined curriculum, while other CTLs provided guidance on how to manage the work if you fall behind on the course scope and sequence.

Other interviewees were not as positive. A middle school Spanish Teacher (MS Span. 1) said that "We touched on it very briefly." A middle school humanities teacher (MS Hum. 1) stated "If there was [support regarding workload management] "I don't remember." A high school English teacher (HS Eng. 1) expressed:

We talked a lot about how to grade constructive responses, we never really went into [workload management]...that would have actually really helpful, because that is huge, that as a first-year teacher, I've experienced like, oh my God, I can grade out. I committed myself to too much grading. We didn't specifically talk about that [managing the grading]...the most beneficial one we had was when...she showed us how to use that [software], which is a platform where students can record their responses. So that was

really helpful, because it was a different kind of grading. That's the only time we really addressed that [workload management].

Initially, it appeared as if the qualitative data conflicted with quantitative findings that indicated that teachers did not receive workload management support during the virtual roundtables. However, from the qualitative findings, it appears as if workload management support and advice was provided on at least one occasion to 60% of the interviewees during the virtual roundtable sessions. If workload management support and advice were not provided consistently, respondents might have simply forgotten that it was provided at all. The qualitative data findings also provide a bit more context as to why workload management advice was less likely to occur during the virtual roundtable sessions. For example, a middle school Spanish teacher (MS Span. 1) provided an observation that might explain the apparent conflict regarding the lack of workload management support and advice available during the virtual roundtables:

Because each of us have a difference in our class loads; there just are big differences, so unless it's a one-on-one session, which she did do with me within the first two roundtables I believe. She had me stay after, and we just kind of discussed how to help really.

Virtual Roundtable Session Components That Respondents Found Beneficial

On the post-intervention evaluation survey, respondents had the opportunity to rate the benefit they received from experiences that took place as a result of participating in the virtual roundtable sessions. As shown in Table 5.4, less than half (43.6%) of respondents felt as if they had some benefit or a great deal of benefit in receiving new ideas about how to improve their teaching. Also, 46.5% of respondents reported that they found a benefit or a great deal of benefit in receiving a stronger sense of connection or support from other teachers. When comparing this

data to respondents' ratings for whether they gained new perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and if the virtual roundtables provided them with a new outlet for expressing and sharing frustrations, concerns, or problems (as indicated in Table 5.4), far fewer respondents, 26.7% and 36% respectively, found the virtual roundtables to be beneficial for the aforementioned.

Table 5.4

Frequency of Participant Ratings of Benefits from Participation in Virtual Roundtables

	1 (not much benefit)	2	3	4	5 (a great deal of benefit)	NR
New ideas about how to improve the way you teach.	9.4 (8)	21.1 (18)	25.9 (22)	31.8 (27)	11.8 (10)	3.4 3
A stronger sense of connection or support from other teachers	12.8 (11)	15.1 (13)	25.6 (22)	29.1 (25)	17.4 (15)	2.3 2
New perspectives on your strengths and weakness in teaching.	22.1 19	22.1 19	29.1 25	17.4 15	9.3 8	2.3 2
New outlet for expressing and sharing frustrations, concerns, problems with teaching.	19.8 17	16.3 14	27.9 24	23.3 20	12.8 11	2.3 2

Note. Responses are from the Virtual Teacher Roundtable Evaluation Survey.

Appendix K contains the interview codebook that includes three themes that are the same as the emerging codes that came to light during the review of the qualitative data gathered from

respondent interviews with respect to perceived benefits from participation in virtual roundtables. The three themes include the following: a. an opportunity to collaborate with peer teachers; b. an opportunity to share resources; and c. an opportunity to form relationships with colleagues. These themes are in line with the quantitative data reported above from the evaluation survey. Survey respondents were more likely to indicate that they received more benefit from building a stronger sense of connection with other teachers and they learned new ideas about how to improve their teaching. A middle school humanities teacher (MS Hum. 2) reported that she experienced a personal benefit in that “when people were happy to have the resource that I had created, that was very empowering.” A high school Spanish teacher (HS Span. 1) shared that she appreciated having:

“The opportunity to talk to the other teachers during the course of the school year, and not just about common assessment, has helped me to be a bit more creative about what I’m presenting and a bit more thoughtful. Because after getting the input from all the other teachers, I’ve used some of the material and I know I’ve shared material. And so it felt worthwhile because I was able to share some things that I had, other resources that they didn’t have, and vice versa. It’s just helped me with having more resources to pick from, and then just having other things for scholars to try out.”

A high school math teacher (HS Math 3) reported that the virtual roundtables have influenced who she now reaches out to for support; she elaborated:

I got other people I can go to. And then also, if I have a question for them, I can email that one person and they’ll respond back. And they will share documentation, and they’re very honest about their sharing. If it was a flop, they’ll say, ‘Okay, it was a flop the first

day, and this was my tweak.’ And the next time, it was not nearly the flop it was before. So, they're very honest about their shares.

Very few of the interviewees were able to describe specific components of the virtual roundtables that they found to be least beneficial. A middle school science teacher (MS Sci. 2) said: “some roundtables were more engaging than others but that was more about the unit we were reviewing. I can’t think of any particular session that I did not get anything out of.” Subsequently, from the interviews, I was able to learn more about the challenges that the interviewees faced during the virtual roundtables that may have influenced virtual roundtable participants’ ratings of the items in Table 5.4. When asked about challenges or what respondents felt got in the way of participating in the virtual roundtables, a middle school English teacher (MS Eng. 1) shared that it would have been helpful for virtual roundtable participants to have:

An overview session at the beginning, here are the expectations. We don't care where you do it, but you have to be visible. You have to turn on your camera so that everyone can see your face. You can't keep claiming that you don't have a mic when all computers have mics on them. So, that doesn't work anymore. A serious setting of expectations, because I don't think there were expectations set at some level. She [the CTL] said multiple times she'd be the only face on there, and I'd put my face, she was like, Oh, thank you. No one ever participates. There'd be times where only me and her would be having a conversation. The virtual roundtables allowed people who usually don't contribute, just another way to not contribute to the conversation. It wasn't like the collaborative experience that I thought it was intended to be.

If this interviewee’s experience was not unique and occurred in other virtual roundtables, it may provide some insight on why nearly half of the respondents found no benefit or very little benefit

from the virtual teacher roundtable sessions with regards to it being an outlet for expressing and sharing frustrations, concerns, and problems with teaching, as indicated in Table 5.4. A middle school math teacher (MS Math 1) suggested that he:

Would structure them more [virtual roundtable sessions]. If they were actually structured more like a class, giving us also opportunities to give our own opinions and feedback and what not, that would be good, cause my real impression was that they were too loose.

This “loose” nature referenced by the middle school math teacher somewhat mirrors the suggestion shared by the middle school English teacher in that the facilitation of the session could have some level of influence on the perceived benefits that could result from participation in virtual roundtables. If teachers are not participating or others do not engage in dialogue with their peers during the sessions, this may not have created a virtual roundtable environment where teachers felt comfortable to or compelled to share their challenges with their practice. Both interviewees suggest that changing the conditions for collaboration through establishing expectations or improving the structure could ultimately play a role in virtual roundtable participants’ perceived benefits of the sessions.

Teacher Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction, and Intent to Return

As discussed in chapter three and born out in the current research teachers with high levels of self-efficacy tend to have high levels of job satisfaction and remain in their teaching role for more years than those teachers that have low-self efficacy (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Burley et al., 1991; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982). Research questions three, four, and five seek to gain perspective from respondents if their participation in the virtual roundtable sessions throughout the 2017-2018 school year had any influence on their self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and their intent to return to their teaching assignment for the 2018-2019 school year. The

sections below share the findings aligned to the third, fourth, and fifth research questions referenced in the first part of this chapter.

Participation in Virtual Teacher Roundtables and Teacher Self-Efficacy

The third research question sought to determine to what extent virtual roundtable participation and CTL support influenced self-efficacy beliefs. When reviewing the survey respondent data, more than twice the number of respondents indicated that their CTL helped influence their self-efficacy as compared to the number of respondents that reported that the virtual roundtable experience improved their overall teaching effectiveness. Table 5.5 shows that 47.6% (39 out of the 82) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their CTL helped them improve their self-efficacy. During the semi-structured interviews, each participant was asked: “How has your virtual roundtable and office hour sessions affected your self-confidence or self-efficacy with regards to your ability to succeed as a teacher?” Seven out of the twenty interview respondents reported the virtual roundtables had a positive influence on their self-efficacy.

Table 5.5

Frequency of Participant Ratings of Self-Efficacy Beliefs

	1 (strongly disagree)	2	3	4	5 (strongly agree)	NR
To what extent did your content team leader help you to improve your self-efficacy	11.0 (9)	11.0 (9)	30.5 (25)	25.6 (21)	22.0 (18)	6.8 (6)
My virtual roundtable experience improved my teaching effectiveness	17.9 (15)	22.6 (19)	31.0 (26)	23.8 (20)	4.4 (4)	2.3 (2)

Note. Responses are from the Virtual Teacher Roundtable Evaluation Survey.

The trend mentioned above concerning the interviewees' perceptions of the influence their participation in the virtual roundtables had on their self-efficacy mirrors the quantitative data findings indicating the experience improved their overall teaching effectiveness. A high school math teacher (HS Math 1) shared:

Well, it's increased [self-efficacy]. Not like not 50%, but it's definitely gone up because, number one, because of the more options, number two, because I get to talk to people who are doing what I'm doing every day. Just meeting with them has helped. We've even discussed strategies....Just having more strategies and different ways of presenting the material has been helpful to me as a teacher.

This sentiment regarding the sharing of strategies with colleagues helped in improving self-efficacy was echoed by a middle school career and technical education teacher (MS CTE 1), who said “Yeah, cause anytime you’re collaborating, you get new ideas you just feel more confident to execute.” While some teachers, like the high school math teacher and middle school career technical education teacher quoted above, attributed the increase in self-efficacy to the support of their peers through the sharing of resources, strategies, and ideas. A high school English teacher (HS Eng. 5) had a different perspective on how her virtual roundtable experience increased her self-efficacy:

I think it actually made me feel more confident about my teaching. I think that sometimes clear weaknesses across the district were obvious at the virtual roundtable and so it was, I don't know, to say, ‘Oh that's not a struggle I have so I don't really need to engage in this conversation.’ That was helpful.

However, there were 13 of the 20 interviewees that said their participation in the virtual roundtable sessions had no influence on their self-efficacy. A secondary physical education

teacher (Sec Phys. Ed. 1) said, “other than giving me the strategies, I don’t really think so. I don’t think it changed my teaching practice that much.” I did not specifically ask participants if their CTL influenced their self-efficacy beliefs nor did any of the interviewees mention their CTL influencing their self-efficacy when asked about their experience in the virtual roundtables and their self-efficacy beliefs.

Job Satisfaction and Participation in Virtual Roundtables

The fourth research question sought to determine if respondents would attribute an increase in their overall job satisfaction to their participation in the virtual roundtable session. Each interview participant was asked to expound on the influence of virtual roundtable participation and job satisfaction. Five out of the twenty interviewees reported that their participation had some influence on their job satisfaction. A middle school science teacher (MS Sci. 2) reported that participation in the virtual roundtables improved her job satisfaction because “I feel like I’m working with a team of teachers, and we all have the same goal.” A high school humanities teacher (HS Hum. 1) spoke about the willingness of her peers to share and reported:

What gives me a great deal of job satisfaction is the willingness of the teachers to share. They don’t hold back or say, ‘Well, it may not work for your kids, but this is what I do at my school.’ They say, ‘Okay. This is what I did, and I had some success, try, modify it in any way. And they give all these different ideas that I wouldn’t have to come up with on my own. That does give me some job satisfaction.

The majority of survey respondents (84.6%) provided a rating of three or less and indicated that their participation in virtual roundtables had little to no influence on increasing their overall job satisfaction.

Despite five of the interviewees indicating that their participation in the virtual roundtables significantly improved their overall job satisfaction, the majority of interviewees did not share the same perspective. Fifteen of the interviewees reported that they did not receive an overall boost in overall job satisfaction due to their participation in the virtual roundtable sessions. Most of the interviewees shared the sentiments of a middle school English teacher (MS Eng. 2) who stated that “I think it [job satisfaction] didn't change much because I did not think that was the intent.” A high school science teacher (HS Sci. 1) who expressed his dissatisfaction with the virtual roundtables throughout his interview, shared that “it just felt like something more to do, and I don’t get excitement from doing more things for compliance sake.”

Intention to Return

The fifth research question was designed to determine if teacher participation in the virtual roundtable session has had any influence on teachers’ decisions to return to their teaching assignment. Seven out of the twenty interview respondents reported that their participation had some level of influence on their intention to remain in their teaching role. One of those teachers, a secondary physical education teacher (Sec Phys. Ed. 2) said: “I love these virtual meetings, I finally feel like the network is trying to do something to support our work-life balance and allow us to meet virtually and not drive across Dallas to meet with other teachers.” A high school career and technical education teacher (HS CTE 1) said that he did think virtual roundtables had:

A conscious impact [on his intention to remain in his teaching assignment], but if we go more in this direction of virtual meetings, and especially when you think about collaboration days, if those could turn into virtual, man, I think that would take something that is a bit of a morale sucker and turn it into something that people wouldn't dread. And that certainly makes it easier to stay in the teaching world.

Outside of the travel benefits one middle school science teacher (MS Sci. 1) stated:

It just affirms the fact that...science is where I definitely want to be. We have a great team, and we collaborate well. And yeah, I'm having fun with the team of...science teachers in the district as opposed to other subjects.

Another teacher, a high school English teacher (HS Eng. 1) admitted to a small influence:

I would say it played a small part. But I would say yes because I feel like I now have more people than just [CTL Name] to go to, 'cause I know she's not gonna be in that role. But now I know I could go to this person, and that person, and that person 'cause they've taught longer than I have.

Most interviewees, 13 out of 20, stated that their participation had no influence on their decision to remain in their teaching role. A high school Spanish teacher (HS Span. 2) said “not really, although I do appreciate the fact that it exists, because I know that it does not always exist, I do have access to other informed teachers” While a secondary fine arts teacher (Sec. Fine Arts 1) said that “I think it didn't change much because I love teaching and my colleagues before we started these virtual roundtables. So it did not affect much.”

On the evaluation survey, I also asked survey respondents, “How much has your content team leader influenced your decision to remain teaching?” Table 5.6 shows that 37.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their CTL influenced their decision to remain in teaching. Since nearly 40% of survey respondents indicated that their CTL influenced their decision to remain in teaching, there may exist a subset of teachers whose decision to remain in teaching was potentially influenced by their experiences in working with their CTL.

Table 5.6

Frequency of Respondent Ratings of CTL Influence on Their Decision to Remain in Teaching

	1	2	3	4	5	NR
	(not at all)				(a great deal)	
How much has your content team leader influenced your decision to remain teaching?	31.7	9.8	20.7	15.9	22.0	4.5
	26	8	17	13	18	4

Note. Responses are from the Virtual Teacher Roundtable Evaluation Survey.

Table 5.7 below shows that 71 (83.5%) out of the 85 respondents report that they will return to their teaching assignment next year, 14 out of the 85 respondents (16.5%) indicate that they will not return to their teaching assignment next school year, and three respondents did not answer the related survey question. As of July 17, 2018, 193 (70.4%) of the 274 first and second-year teachers at Uplift Education are expected to return to their teaching assignments (T. Thompson, personal communication, July 16, 2018).

Table 5.7

Frequency of Respondent Self-Reports of Their Intention to Return to Their Teaching Assignment for the 2018-2019 School Year

	Yes	No	NR
Will you return to your teaching assignment during the 2018-2019 school year?	83.5% 71	16.5% 14	3.4% 3

Although there appears to be a subset of teachers that believe their participation in the virtual roundtables influenced their decision to remain in their teaching role for the 2018-2019 school year, the majority of survey respondents and those respondents who participated in the interview portion of this study disagreed that their participation in virtual roundtables or their

CTL had any influence on their decision to remain in their teaching role for the 2018-2019 school year.

Summary of Findings

Session Content and Beneficial Components of the Virtual Teacher Roundtables

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the virtual office hour sessions were discontinued due to low attendance at the start of the school year. The network of schools continued to offer the virtual roundtable sessions as scheduled. The virtual roundtables were intended to provide mentor-like support to first and second-year teachers. These experiences were to include an opportunity for first and second-year teachers to learn from their more experienced peer teachers on how to add more effective instructional strategies to their practice and to gain more support with managing their workload. From the findings reported above, it appears as if many of the virtual roundtables offered direct support with instructional design and delivery. From the interviews, many of the respondents said that they enjoyed sharing instructional strategies the most during their virtual roundtable sessions. Over two-thirds of survey respondents reported that during the virtual roundtable sessions they shared successful strategies that they can use in their classroom and at least 40% of respondents said that there were opportunities provided during the virtual roundtable session to review and design materials for lessons and assessments.

On the contrary, nearly half of the survey respondents report that they did not receive specific workload management support and advice. Fewer than one in four respondents reported that they received this type of support during the virtual roundtable sessions. From the interviews, it appears as if in some virtual roundtable sessions CTLs made intentional efforts to discuss ways to manage their workloads while others did not or did so sparingly. After reviewing both the quantitative and qualitative data, it appears as if CTLs placed a higher

premium on ensuring that respondents had an opportunity to learn and share instructional strategies than on providing guidance around workload management support during the virtual roundtable sessions.

From the survey results, more than two out of five respondents reported they benefitted from hearing ideas about instructional practice and the fact that they felt a stronger sense of connection and support that virtual roundtable participation offered. Less than 35% of respondents reported that roundtable participation was beneficial in that they gained new perspectives on their strengths and weaknesses and the sessions served as outlets for sharing frustrations, concerns, and problems with teaching. Some of the interviewees mentioned that the collaborative experience was not what they thought the virtual roundtables intended to offer. Many mentioned a need for more structure to the sessions. Some of the interview participants shared the perspective that wanted thoughtfully facilitated sessions that were designed to share specific strategies and include more structured collaborative experiences that allow respondents to design curricula and instructional strategies together.

Teacher Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction, and Intent to Return

When respondents addressed the question regarding whether or not the virtual roundtables improved their overall teacher effectiveness, most respondents on the survey and interviews reported that their participation did not improve their self-efficacy. However, when respondents answered the question on the survey regarding if their CTL helped to improve their self-efficacy, more respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the related statement when compared to those who disagreed or strongly disagreed. However, after deeper analysis of the difference in participant ratings regarding their CTL improving their self-efficacy when considering high and low participation this difference in participant, ratings was not statistically

significant. Although respondents indicated that the virtual roundtable session themselves did not improve their beliefs around their overall teaching efficacy, there does seem to be some indication that support provided by the CTL may play a role in helping teachers to improve their self-efficacy beliefs.

Less than 15% of respondents reported that “my virtual roundtable experience significantly increased my overall job satisfaction.” During the interview portion of this study, teachers who said that their participation in the virtual roundtables increased their overall job satisfaction, often mentioned the relationships with their peers and the enjoyment they got out of working with peers that were willing to share resources and ideas as playing a role in job satisfaction beliefs. Although a small subset of respondents placed a value around peer-to-peer collaboration as part of their overall job satisfaction ratings, it appears as if participating in virtual teacher roundtables had little to no influence on teacher job satisfaction.

During the interview portion, seven out of the twenty interviewees reported that their participation in virtual roundtables played a role in their intention to remain in the teaching profession. Two of the interviewees said the participation in virtual roundtables helped by limiting travel and, in turn, supporting a work-life balance. Another participant reported that she enjoyed the collaboration and connection she had with the teachers in her virtual roundtable session and it affirms her decision to remain in her teaching role for the upcoming school year.

The aforementioned qualitative findings are not overwhelmingly convincing that virtual roundtable participation influences teachers’ decisions to remain in their teaching role. The results from the survey regarding whether the course team lead had any influence on teachers’ intention to remain in their teaching role for the next school year provides little insight into if the CTLs themselves have some level of influence. The survey results indicated that 31 respondents

affirmed that their CTL influenced their decision to remain in teaching, and 34 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that their CTL influenced their decision to remain in teaching. The same observable trend with regards to the CTL having some influence on teacher self-efficacy is not seen with regards to intention to remain in the teaching role irrespective of how many virtual roundtables attended. It appears as if the findings are inconclusive with regards to whether virtual roundtables have any influence on teachers' intentions to remain in their teaching assignment.

Limitations

As mentioned in chapter four, the one-group post-test study design has multiple threats to internal validity, as some of the ratings of respondents' perceptions of certain constructs could have been influenced by many other factors that are outside of the scope of this evaluation. This study design also impacts the generalizability of the study's findings. The study took place in one charter school network. Therefore, this does not allow for generalizations to other first and second-year teachers in other charter schools (including CMO, EMO, and standalone). Comparing first and second-year teachers that participated in the virtual roundtables to a matched control group could have increased the external validity (Rossi, et al., 2004) and would be a productive next step in exploring the questions raised in this study.

Secondly, only first and second-year secondary teachers (grades 6-12) participated in this study. Therefore, this limits the making of generalizations to primary or post-secondary grade levels. Further, only 88 out of 274 eligible respondents completed the virtual roundtable evaluation survey. This low return rate limits the generalizability of the findings of this evaluation within the Uplift Education network of secondary school regarding first and second-year teacher participation in the virtual roundtable session.

Implications for Practice

In response to the finding discussed above, Uplift Education ensured that they trained each CTL to facilitate each virtual roundtable session and established the expectation that all first and second-year teachers must attend each session. In practice, we saw that adherence to the preset agenda varied by CTL, and all CTLs did not keep minutes and post the recordings for each virtual roundtable session. Attendance was taken during each session, however, all first and second-year teachers did not attend all sessions. Respondents also spoke of varied or low participation by individual respondents in some virtual roundtable sessions and the influence that had on the quality of the session. It is clear that the network needs to establish a set of clear norms for both attendance and participation, establish a system for close monitoring for quality control, and institute a system where respondents and CTLs give and receive feedback to consistently work toward improving the overall virtual roundtable experience for all respondents.

Secondly, network leaders should follow-up with first and second-year teachers to examine what other types of experiences they need to further increase their perceptions of their role effectiveness. The virtual roundtable experience provided teachers with the mastery experiences; however, Bandura (1986) suggests that verbal persuasion, emotional support, and vicarious experiences play a role in improving self-efficacy. Adding more layers of support in addition to providing virtual teacher roundtables monthly may aid in developing a more comprehensive program for support for first and second-year teachers.

Finally, although my aims regarding the launch of virtual teacher roundtables influencing teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and teachers' intention to remain in their teaching role were ambitious, there still exists an opportunity for charter school leaders to examine their local (on campus) context. This examination should include considerations with regards to what

school-based factors directly influence teacher job satisfaction and teachers' intention to remain in their teaching position. Torres (2014) states that teachers often feel more connected to their local context (not necessarily the district). Human capital theory, as referenced in chapter one, suggests that there are elements beyond monetary factors that influence employees' decision to leave their position (Kallerberg & Mastekaasa, 2001; Cochran-Smith, Channady, McEachern, Piazza, Power, & Ryan, 2010). Examining school-based factors beyond instructional support and looking deeper into campus culture and collegial support with regards to improving teacher job satisfaction and teacher retention would be a good place to start for further investigation and intervention planning.

Implications for Research

As discussed in chapter three, beginning teachers find it beneficial to receive direct support from experienced peer teachers at the start of their teaching careers (Brill & McCartney, 2008; De Neve, Devos, & Tuytens, 2015; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Mahfud, 2017; Tam, 2015). The Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) Program Study conducted by ICF International (2009) on behalf of the Texas Education Agency found that 80% of respondents (1695 total respondents) strongly agreed or agreed that they valued the shared instructional strategies that they could use in their classrooms as a result of their participation in the BTIM program (ICF International, 2009). This finding is similar to the findings stated above regarding the beneficial experiences respondents had in the virtual roundtable sessions. I also observed a difference in teacher ratings in how teachers perceived their participation in the virtual roundtable sessions influenced their self-efficacy as compared to how they perceived their mentor teachers' influence on their self-efficacy. There is a need for more research around what types of experienced teachers are more effective mentors to new teachers and what types of

training experienced teachers need to become effective mentors (Aspfors & Bondas, 2013; European Commission, 2012; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Most research on mentor teachers is done with mentors of pre-service teachers (Aspfors & Frannsen, 2015; Ballantyne & Mylonas, 1992; Hudson, 2014; Sundli, 2007). Charter school and district leaders are left with little direction around how to select, monitor, and evaluate mentor effectiveness beyond whether or not they execute their duties as a mentor teacher. Further research could provide some guidance to charter networks regarding the cost-effective essential design of mentor teacher selection and training to aid in developing new teachers.

Another implication is a need to examine what key components of online, in-person, and blended new teacher mentoring programs that teachers may value and to share the challenges that are presented in each context. From this study, it is observable that some teachers strongly valued getting support via an online platform while others were less favorable about their experience. If this displeasure with the virtual roundtable experience is not related to the quality of the mentor nor the content of the session, it may have been related to the context in which the support was provided. Conducting research that compares new teacher mentoring in multiple contexts may allow for charter school and district leaders to thoughtfully plan and differentiate mentoring supports that meet the needs of most new teachers.

When considering Ingersoll and Colleagues' (2000) urgings around the role that organizational cultural theory plays in creating the shared realities of the members of the organization, it is important that further research is conducted regarding the role that the collective experience of teachers that participate in the virtual professional learning communities has on teacher job satisfaction and intention to remain in their teaching role. As mentioned in chapter one, organizational culture within the school setting is influenced by the beliefs, the

interpersonal relationships, the allocation of resources, and how the staff manages their stress (Lindhal, 2006; Owens, 2004; Rosseau, 1990). In this study, some teachers spoke highly of their value of having an opportunity to collaborate with their peers during their virtual roundtable participation. Perhaps, a more in-depth examination of teachers' collective experiences and views regarding the collaborative culture created in online (virtual) collaboration spaces may provide insight into what extent this type of collaboration influences the overall organizational culture within a charter school network. This may provide charter school leaders more insight into the influence that collaborative organizational cultures (in-person or online) may have on teacher job satisfaction and intention to remain in their teaching role.

Conclusion

In evaluating the network's use of virtual teacher roundtables and the potential for influence on teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and teachers' intentions to remain in their teaching assignment, I have learned many things that I can and have transferred into my professional practice. When the network quickly chose to eliminate the virtual office hours without examining potential root causes for the low participation, it was akin to prior experiences in the network when there is often a change to a program or practice very quickly without considering barriers of implementation and determining root causes for certain phenomenon. This identifies a practice in the organizational culture that impedes the appropriate evaluation of systems or interventions and could potentially lead to weak root cause analysis and impact the results of an evaluation of an intervention, practice, or efficacy of a system. To overcome an occurrence like the one that took place when the virtual office hours were abruptly ended, when establishing new interventions and programs I have learned how to integrate multiple stakeholders in both the design, implementation, and evaluation of an intervention. With a

current network program, I have leveraged the support of stakeholders from the curriculum team, communications team, school leaders, and members of our people team to ensure that key components of the intervention are designed and implemented by a number of people throughout the organization. Decisions for the committee are determined by the three committee co-chairs that represent each cluster within the network. I also created a 58-page guiding document that outlines the rationale, responsibilities of key stakeholders, timelines for monitoring, evaluation, and decision-making for the next three years.

Secondly, one of the challenges early on in the implementation phase of this intervention was that participant use of the Skype for Business platform was challenging because of both user and system capabilities. Although the CTLs walked teachers through the process during the beginning of the year professional development session, some participants struggled with signing on to the platform. As a result, this year during the implementation of the virtual roundtables, teachers did a practice session before school started and school leaders did a check after the first virtual roundtable and reported any technology issues that teachers may have had. Further, I have learned when launching a year-long intervention or program it is critical to hear about the participant experience both early and often. As a result, each school leader now reviews the reports generated by the Curriculum Team during leader monthly check-ins to learn more about their teacher participants' experience. Teachers provide feedback about their experience at the end of each session and have the opportunity to talk about their virtual roundtable experience on the network survey distributed at the quarterly in-person teacher professional development session to address their concerns and improve the virtual teacher roundtable experience.

Further, to ensure that participants of virtual roundtables and other network-designed programs are knowledgeable and adhere to expectations, I have learned that it is important to

communicate expectations upfront, ensure that all participants and related stakeholders are aware of what happens if an expectation is not met, and to develop an accountability system for all stakeholders involved in the intervention or program. For this school year, the network created a set of written expectations in collaboration with school leaders to review and share with to share with teachers at the at the beginning of school professional development session. In addition, the curriculum team created a scope and sequence that was shared with both teachers and leaders and reviewed summer professional development sessions for all related sessions. The Curriculum Coordinators now audit each CTL Blackboard site to ensure that recordings are posted following each session. The network has seen improved attendance rates to each virtual roundtable session thus far in the 2018-2019 school year.

The results of this study suggest that when a charter network implements a virtual professional learning community that meets monthly over the course of the school year, first and second-year secondary teachers have the opportunity to share resources and learn instructional strategies from their more experienced peers within the charter school network. This type of support appears to be valued by a subset of teachers who desire to learn from collaborating with their peers on curricula design and implementation strategies. Moreover, this platform allows teachers to meet with their peer teachers without having to travel to another campus and can take place on their campus or any other designated area approved by the school principal which may influence teacher perceptions of work/life balance.

Lastly, the study results indicate that participation in virtual roundtable sessions has little to no influence on teachers' job satisfaction. The charter school network and school leaders should consider other factors that may play a role in teachers' overall job satisfaction outside of the virtual roundtable setting or how to enhance the activities and structures within the virtual

roundtable sessions to improve the overall teacher experience and be explicit about the roundtables intention to have a positive influence on teacher job satisfaction. Although the majority of first and second-year teachers that participated in this study indicated that they found value in sharing instructional strategies, there seems to be an area for future investigation for the network regarding the role that the CTL plays in developing teacher self-efficacy and their influence on teachers' decisions to remain in the teaching role. Due to the limited ability of the research design to determine a causal relationship, some of the findings indicated in the findings section of this chapter suggest looking at how the network can ensure they are training and developing CTLs to support with developing and retaining first and second-year teachers. Virtual support from CTLs may be a lever that charter school leaders can pull to address teacher attrition challenges in the charter school sector.

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Appendix A: Needs Assessment Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to analyze the problem of teacher attrition in Uplift Education, Your responses to this questionnaire will help to gain insight into why teacher attrition at Uplift Education has been such a problem and the possible steps that could be taken to increase teacher retention. Your response to this questionnaire will contribute to data collection for the purposes of a dissertation. This questionnaire is anonymous and will be kept confidential. If you have any questions please contact Remy L. Washington at (972) 809-9472 or email her at rwashi21@jhu.edu. Thank you in advance for your participation in this questionnaire. This survey is modeled after a survey created by Knauer (2014).

Instructions: Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. The questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes.

General Questions:

1. What is your age?

- ☐ 22-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-35 ☐ 36-40 ☐ Over 40

2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

3. What race do you best identify with?

- ☐ Caucasian
☐ African American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Asian
☐ Other

4. What is your highest degree earned?

- ☐ Bachelor's ☐ Master's ☐ Doctorate

5. Do you currently teach at Uplift Education?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

General Questions (continued)

6. How many years were you/have you been teaching at Uplift Education?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
☐ 1 year
☐ 2 years
☐ 3 years
☐ 4 years
☐ 5 or more years

7. Did you have any teaching experience (not including student teaching) prior to beginning at Uplift Education?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. Were you given a mentor when you began teaching at Uplift Education?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. Will you be employed at Uplift Education for the 2016-2017 school year?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Questions about *job satisfaction* at Uplift Education

On the following 5-point scale, please rate how influential the following educational elements were in your decision to leave/stay at Uplift Education. Please select N/A if the element is not relevant to your experience at Uplift Education.

	Significantly Influenced	Influenced	Influenced Minimally	Didn't Influence at all	N/A
1. Leadership					
(e.g., those people in leadership positions and their competence)	5	4	3	2	1
2. Administrative support (e.g., support provided to you by administrators)	5	4	3	2	1
3. Personal work achievement (e.g., experiencing personal success)	5	4	3	2	1
4. Working Conditions (e.g., available material, work load in/outside of the classroom)	5	4	3	2	1
5. Salary (e.g., compensation for	5	4	3	2	1

responsibilities)

6. Job Stressors

(e.g.,

dealing with students/parents, paperwork, time)	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

7. Students (e.g.,
dealing

with student issues, discipline, ability levels)	5	4	3	2	1
--	---	---	---	---	---

Significantly Influenced	Influenced	Influenced Minimally	Didn't Influence at all	N/A
-----------------------------	------------	-------------------------	-------------------------------	-----

8. Additional

Responsibilities

(e.g., ARD

meetings, lesson plans, meetings, paperwork, lunch duty, carline)	5	4	3	2	1
--	---	---	---	---	---

9. Accountability

(e.g.,

being responsible for and judged on student performance)	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

10. Are there any additional educational elements that may have influenced your decision to stay at/leave Uplift Education? If yes, please explain.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Questions about *teacher recruitment* at Uplift Education

Please answer the following questions on teacher recruitment to the best of your ability.

1. What path did you take when entering education?

- ☐ Traditional University Program
- ☐ Alternative Route (Texas Teachers, TFA, etc.)

2. How were you recruited to teach at Uplift Education?

- ☐ Job fair
- ☐ Applied online to Uplift Education
- ☐ An individual recruited you
- ☐ Other: _____

3. Did the interview properly prepare you to teach at an Uplift Education school? (e.g. were you aware of the student population, the school's history, the school's successes and failures)

If no, please explain.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. In general, do you think you were properly prepared to teach the students of Uplift Education prior to your first day? If no, please explain.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Appendix B: Needs Assessment Interview Questions

Those who are selected to participate in the interview portion of the study will be asked the following questions. These interview questions are modeled after a survey created by Knauer (2014).

Interviewer:

The purpose of this interview is to understand why teacher attrition in Uplift Education, is higher than that of schools in the surrounding area and to explore the factors that make the teachers of Uplift Education leave the school more often than their counterparts.

Questions:

1. Do you currently teach at Uplift Education?
2. Tell me how long you taught/have taught at Uplift Education
3. Describe your experience at Uplift Education.
4. *During your time at Uplift Education, what would you say were some of its strengths?
5. *During your time at an Uplift Education School, what would you say were some of its weaknesses?
6. How did the support that you received from the network, school leader, or peers improve your ability to manage your workload and improve your instructional delivery?
7. Based upon your own perceptions, what factors do you believe are contributing to teachers leaving their teaching assignments in Uplift Education?
8. Based upon your own perceptions, what factors do you believe keep teachers at Uplift Education?
9. How much of your belief about your ability to manage your workload and provide proficient instructional delivery influence your decision to leave or remain in your teaching position for the upcoming school year?
10. Is there something that Uplift Education could create or change to improve teacher retention?

*Only asked to teachers who have left their teaching assignment at Uplift Education.

Appendix C: Virtual Office Hour and Roundtable Protocols

Virtual Office Hours Protocol

Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Collaboration Day Kickoff, the CTL polls their team as to when the most beneficial time for office hours might be. Office hours must be held Monday – Friday between 7 am and 7 pm. • After determining the optimal time, the CTL will schedule office hours once a month for one hour. The CTL will send Outlook calendar invites to their teammates and CC to hold the time. They will also create a Blackboard announcement with the dates and times for the quarter. The CTL will send additional invites and create a new announcement at the start of every quarter for the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ If any scheduled office hours need to change as the year progresses, the CTL will immediately email their CC and update both the calendar invite and announcement. • 2 – 3 business days prior to each scheduled office hours, the CTL will update the Outlook calendar invite and create a new Blackboard announcement with the topic of the upcoming office hours. Teachers will RSVP to the CTL using the calendar invite. Teachers/leaders may also submit questions about the topic of office hours or any other instructional question at this time by emailing the CTL. • CTLs will prepare for each office hour by fully fleshing out the agenda, creating or collecting scholar work samples, annotating deliverables, and preparing answers to teacher/leader submitted questions, as needed. The CC will support the CTL in preparing for their office hours.
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CTL, teachers, leaders, and/or CC will log in to Skype for Business at the scheduled time to attend the office hours. The CTL should take attendance of who has joined the session and begin recording the session (even if no one is in attendance). These office hours are mandatory for all first and second year teachers. • The CTL will spend 30 – 45 minutes on the topic of the office hours and the remaining 15 – 30 minutes on Q&A. All questions should be based in the content of the course and the course vision/course structure. Office hours will not be used for behavior management or other coaching action steps.
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CTL will post the video recording of the office hours to Blackboard along with a short description of what topic was covered by the CTL and through any teacher/leader generated questions. • The CTL will email the CC with a recap of the office hours including who/what campuses attended, compared with who RSVP'd, any feedback about how the prepared topic went, the questions teachers/leaders asked, and any modifications that may need to be considered for upcoming sessions. The CTL should also note any follow up the CC may need to take with a specific campus or leader. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ CC follows up with campus leaders about lack of attendance and suggested attendance to future office hours. • The CTL emails their cohort with a recap of the topics discussed and questions asked (without identifying information).

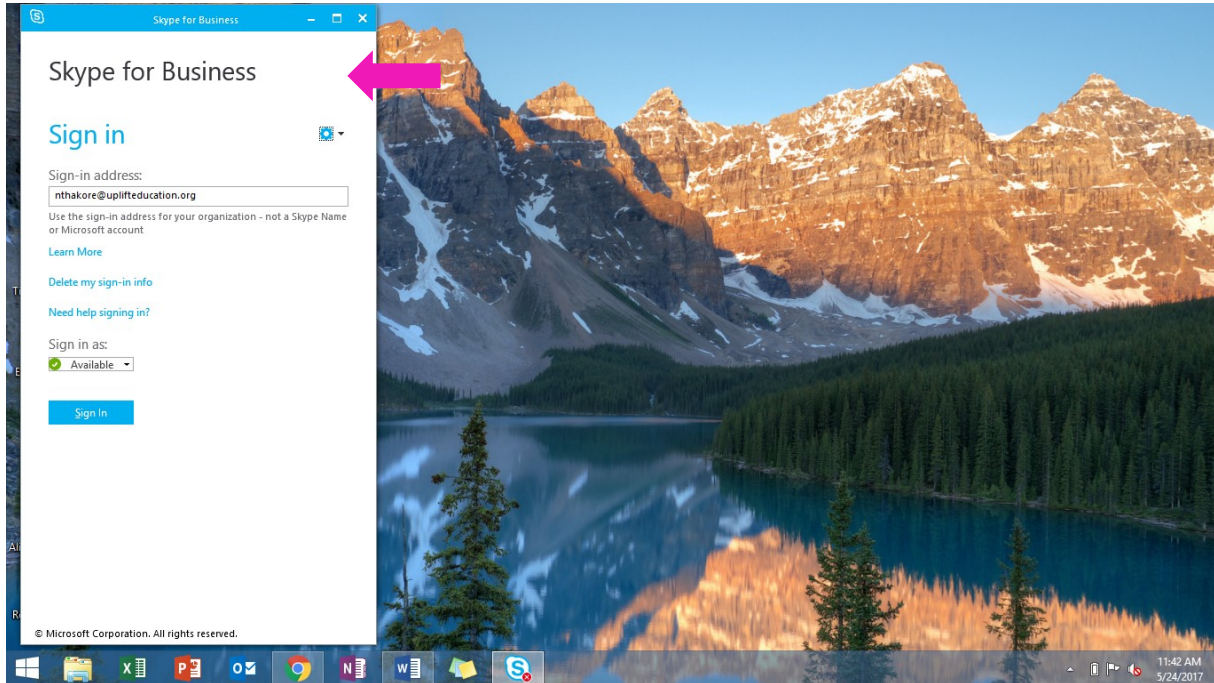
Virtual Roundtable Protocol

Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One campus leader will be assigned to each Secondary content area. This leader will attend every virtual roundtable for that course. The CTL will post all roundtable dates for the year in a Blackboard announcement and send Outlook calendar invites to their teammates and assigned leader to hold the time. Dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> August 30, 2017 September 27, 2017 November 29, 2017 January 31, 2018 February 28, 2018 March 28, 2018 April 25, 2018 Time: 3:30 – 4:30 pm 2 – 3 business days prior to each scheduled roundtable, the CTL will update the Outlook calendar invite and create a new Blackboard announcement with the topic of the upcoming roundtable. Teachers will RSVP to the CTL using the calendar invite. Teachers/leaders may also submit questions about the topic of roundtable or any other instructional question at this time by emailing the CTL. CTLs will prepare for each roundtable by fully fleshing out the agenda, creating or collecting scholar work samples, annotating deliverables, and preparing answers to teacher/leader submitted questions, as needed. The CC will support the CTL in preparing for their roundtable.
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CTL, teachers, leaders, and/or CC will log in to Skype for Business at the scheduled time to attend the roundtable. The CTL should take attendance of who has joined the session and begin recording the session. These roundtables are mandatory for all teachers and the assigned campus leader. The CTL will spend 30 – 45 minutes on the topic of the roundtable and the remaining 15 – 30 minutes on Q&A. All questions should be based in the content of the course and the course vision/course structure. Roundtables will not be used for behavior management or other coaching action steps.
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CTL will post the video recording of the roundtable to Blackboard along with a short description of what topic was covered by the CTL and through any teacher/leader generate questions. The campus leader will fill out a short google doc with praise and adjusting feedback for the CTL. The CC will review the feedback and share it with the CTL in an individual debrief before the next roundtable. The CTL will email the CC with a recap of the roundtable including anyone who did not attend, any feedback about how the prepared topic went, the questions teachers/leaders asked, and any modifications that may need to be considered for upcoming sessions. The CTL should also note any follow up the CC may need to take with a specific campus or leader. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CC follows up with campus leaders about lack of attendance and suggested attendance to future office hours.

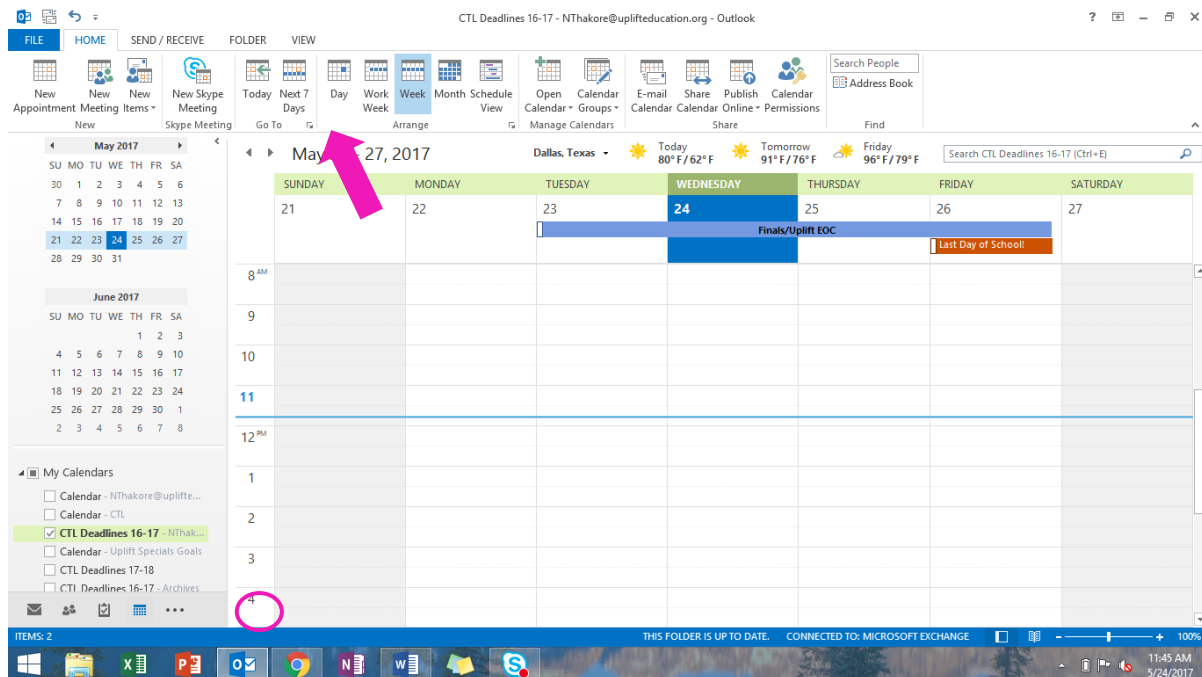
Appendix D: Skype for Business How-To Guide

Office Hours on Skype for Business *How-To Guide*

1. Log into Skype for Business using the same username/password you use to login to your work computer. **NOTE:** Do not use Skype, only Skype for Business.

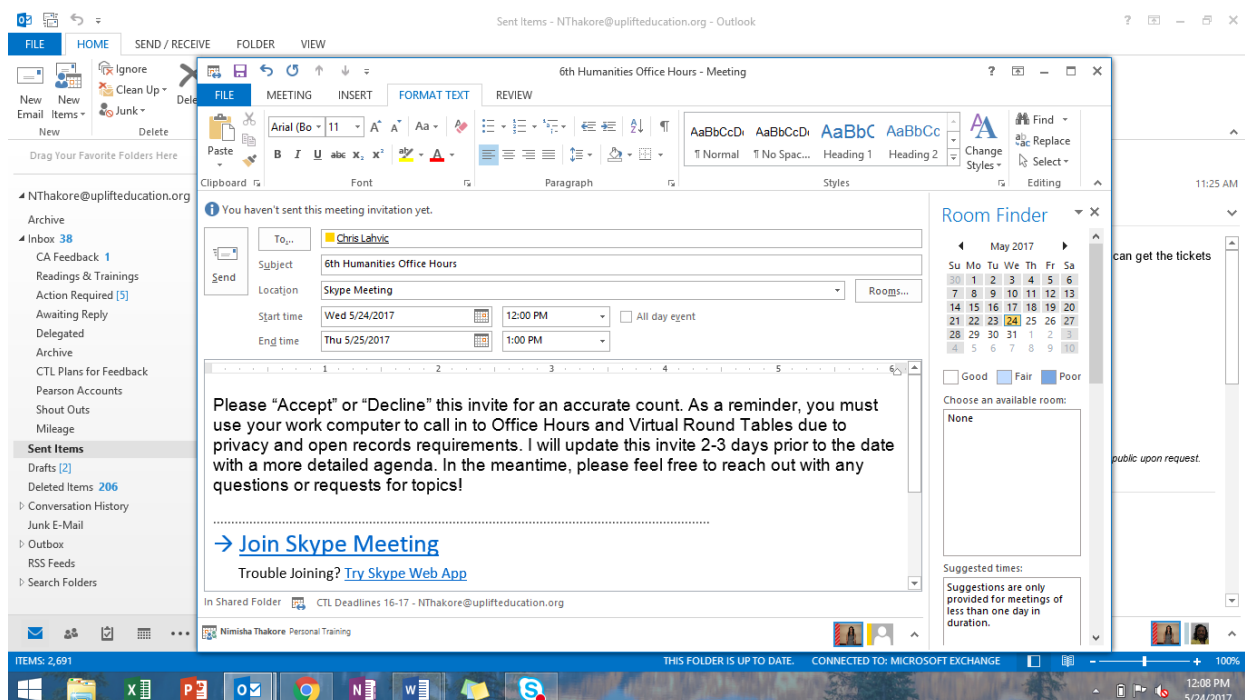


2. Open your Outlook e-mail and navigate to your calendar. Click “New Skype Meeting”.



3. Input the following information for your office hours:

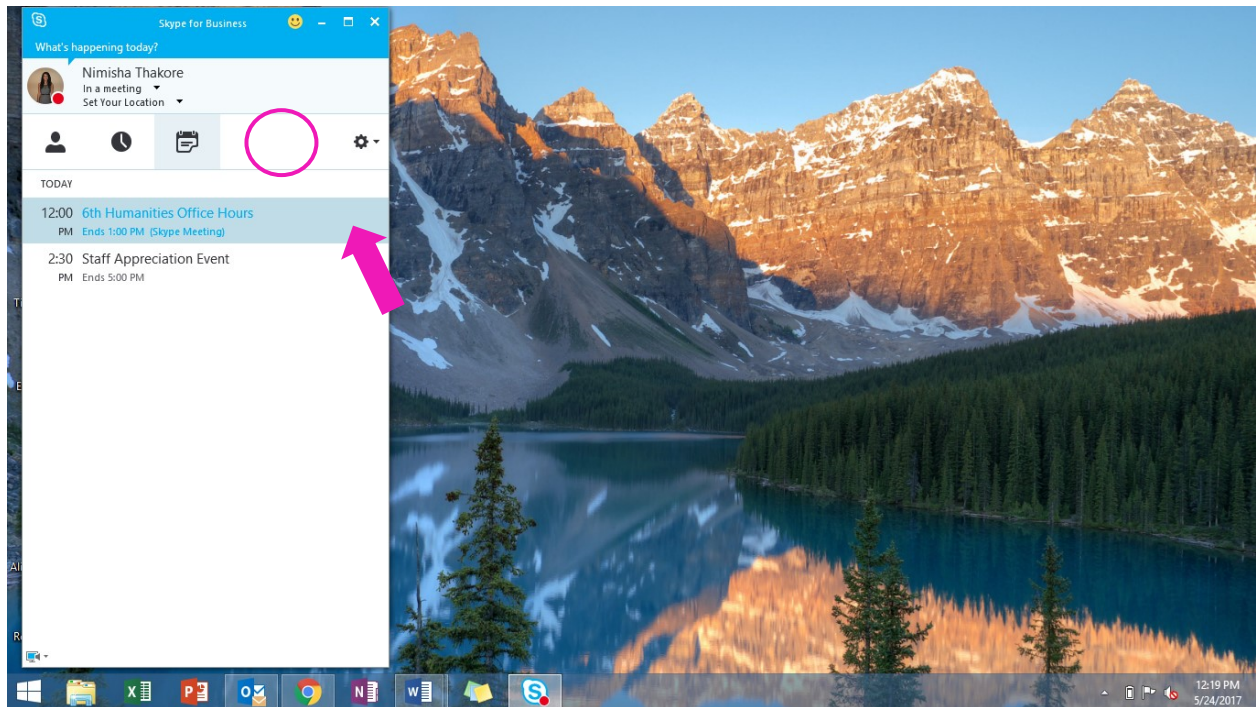
- **To:** Include all teachers in your cohort on every invite.
- **Subject:** Use the convention “Subject Office Hours” (ex. “6th Humanities Office Hours”). Ensure you use this same convention on every invite.
 - For monthly mandatory virtual roundtables, use the convention “Subject Virtual Roundtable” (ex. “6th Humanities Virtual Roundtable”)
- **Location:** This will automatically populate with “Skype Meeting”. Leave this as-is.
- **Time:** Select the day and 1-hour window the office hours will take place.
- **Description:** Include the following common language in the body of every invite:
Please “Accept” or “Decline” this invite for an accurate count. As a reminder, you must use your work computer to call in to Office Hours and Virtual Round Tables due to privacy and open records requirements. I will update this invite 2-3 days prior to the date with a more detailed agenda. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out with any questions or requests for topics!



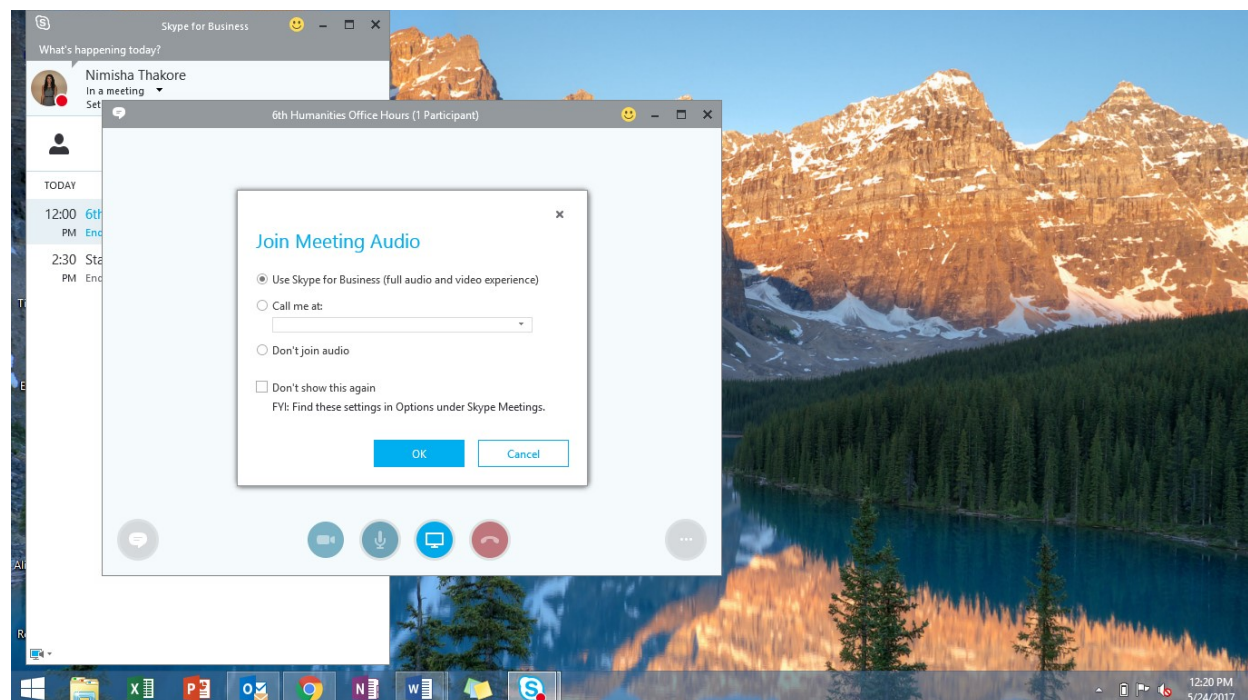
4. Send the invite.

5. 2-3 days prior to the scheduled office hours, open the calendar invite by double-clicking on it in your Outlook calendar and add the meeting agenda.

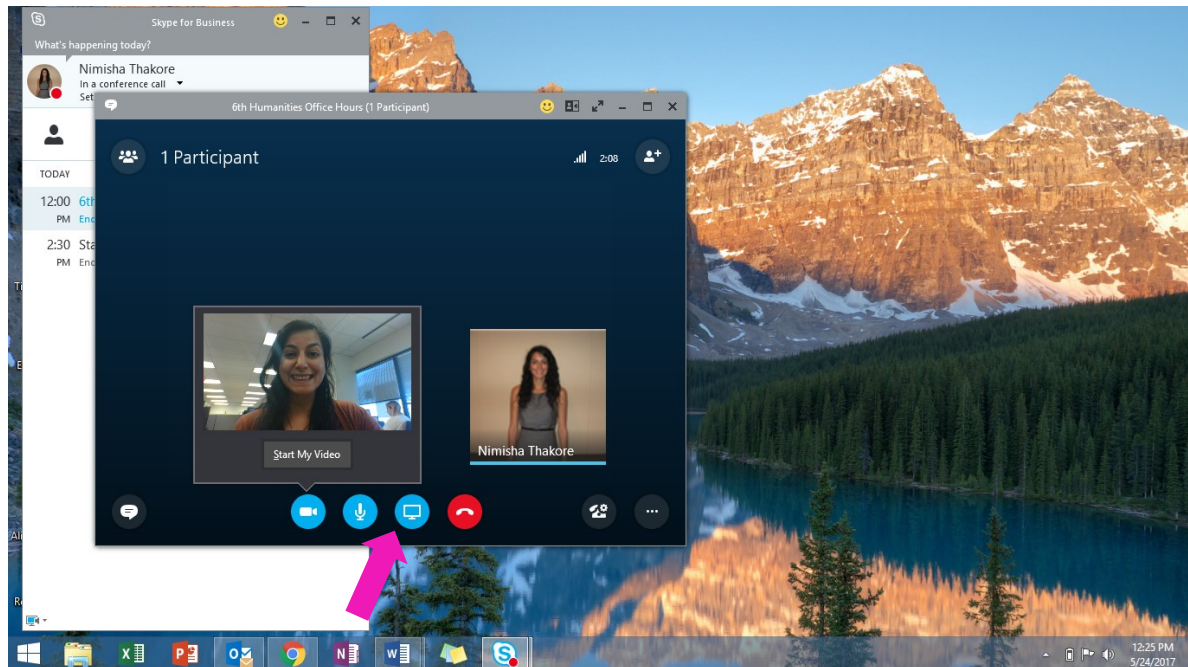
6. On day of the office hours, join the meeting 5-10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time to welcome others as they join the call. Log into Skype for Business click the “Meetings” icon (circled below) and double-click on the office hours.
- Alternatively, you can open the calendar invite and click on “Join Skype Meeting”. This is how teachers will access the call.
 - The program may take a few minutes or freeze momentarily – give it some time!



7. When prompted, select “Use Skype for Business (full audio and video experience)”.

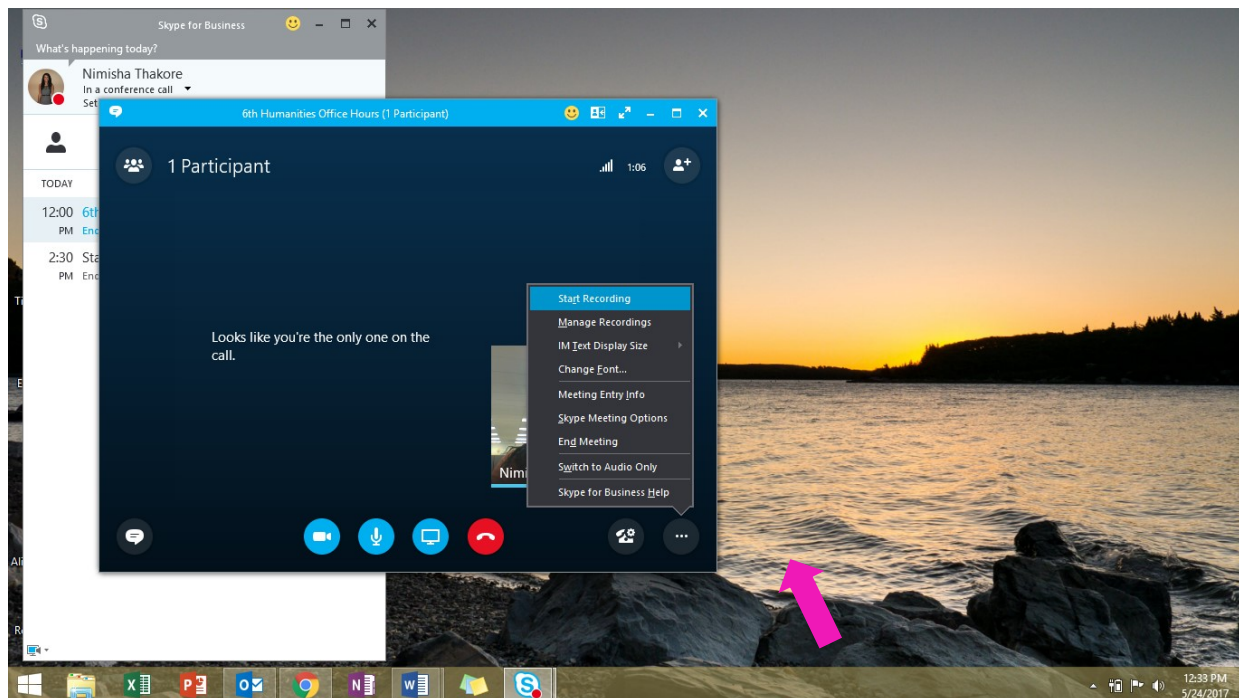


8. If your video doesn't automatically show up, click the "Video Call" icon and select "Start Video".
- NOTE:** Only CTLs should have both audio and video activated. All other participants should be on audio only. Too many videos will slow down transmission and create unnecessary complications.
- If during the office hours a teacher would like to show something they've created, you can prompt them to activate their video *or* share their screen for a limited time.

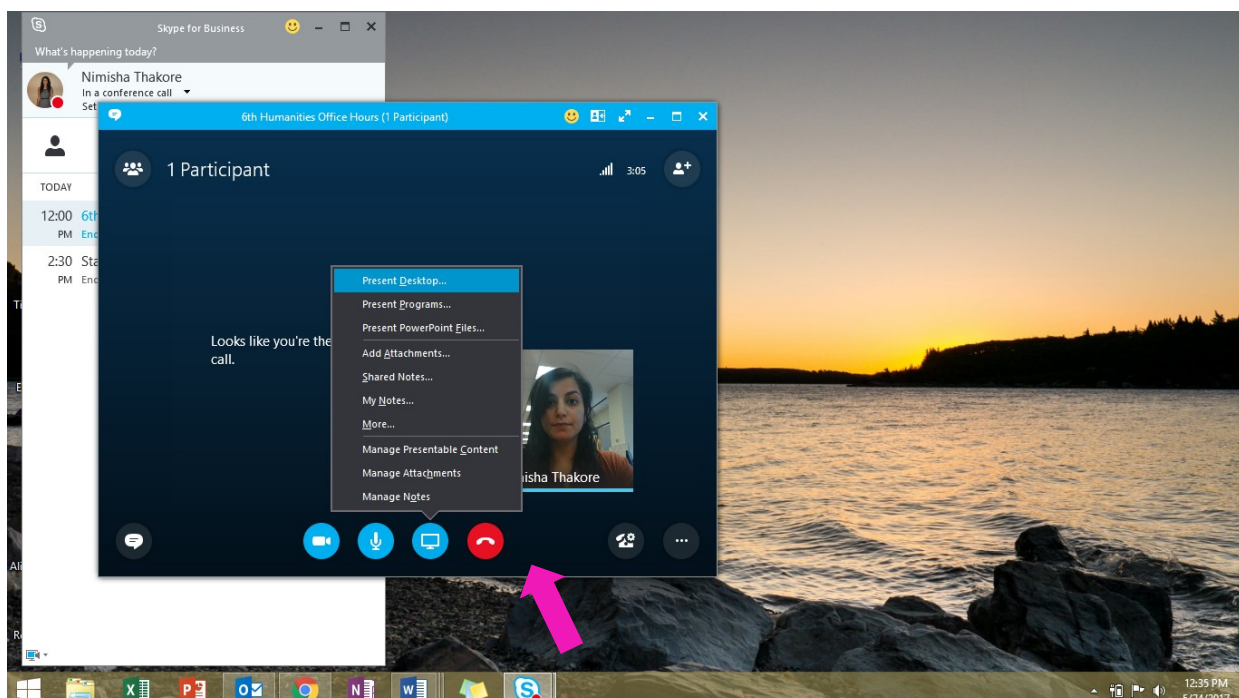


9. If needed, wait a couple of minutes to ensure all participants have called in. At the start of your session, let everyone know that the call will be recorded. You might use language like the following:
"Hi everyone, welcome to our office hours this afternoon! Just as a reminder before we get started, this session will be recorded and posted on Blackboard. If you'll give me a moment, I'll go ahead and start the recording."

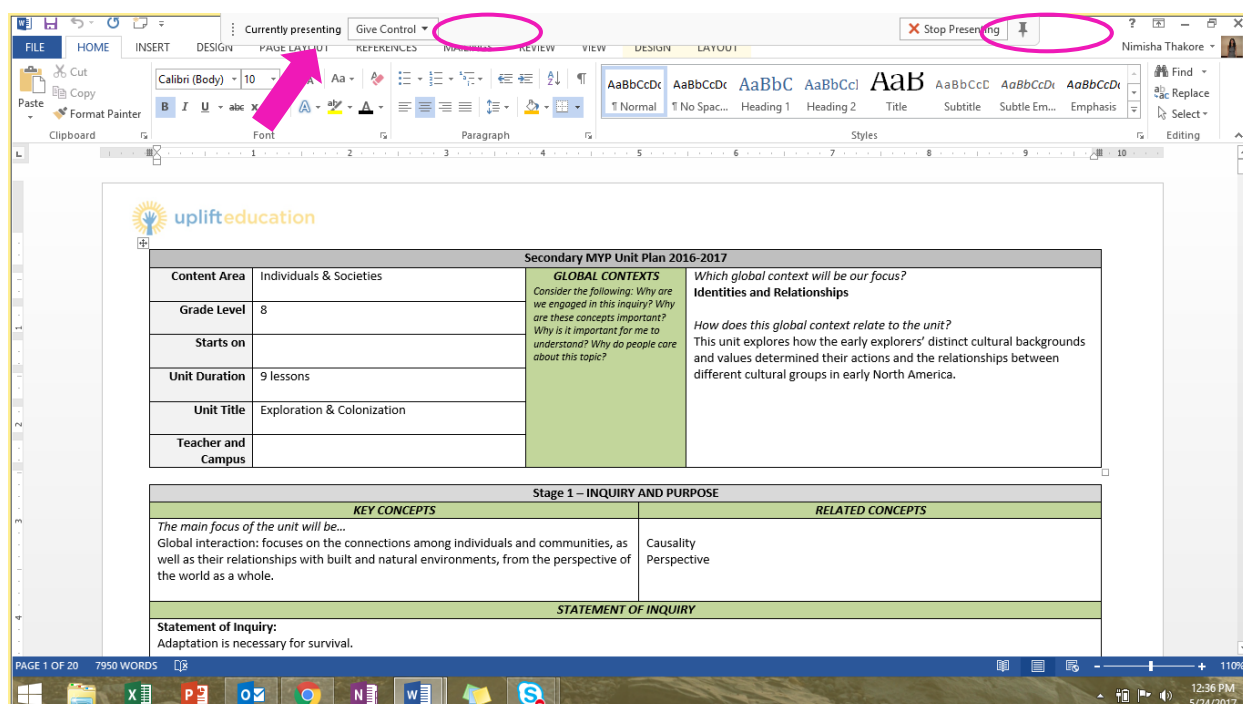
10. To start recording, click the “More Options” icon and select “Start Recording”. Pause, stop, and recording icons will appear on the bottom and top right, indicating that the recording as begun.



11. To share your screen with all participants, click the “Present” icon and select “Present Desktop” (or another option, if that better fits your needs). When prompted with a preview, click “Present”. A window will appear warning you that people will be able to see everything on your screen. Click “Ok”.
- Before sharing your desktop, ensure that you have eliminated clutter and that you are prepared for everyone to see everything on your screen!

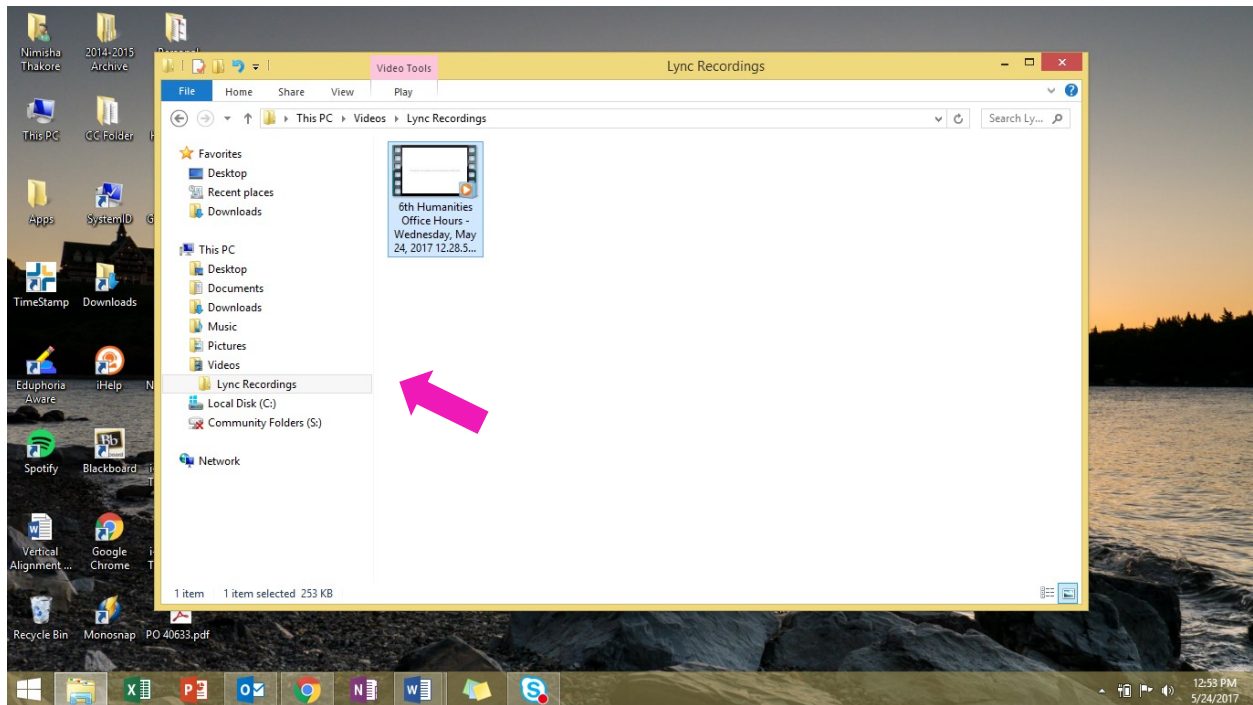


12. Minimize your meeting screen to fully display the document/resource. If your meeting screen is open, all other participants will see it as well. You will see the toolbar below when you are sharing your screen.
- Participants will see your screen live, including any scrolling and typing. This could be useful in creating/modifying resources together or capturing participants' thoughts/feedback on a resource.
 - To give control of your screen to another participant, click "Give Control" and select the participant. This allows the participant to edit the document you have opened without you having to email it. You will likely use this tool sparingly, but it could be helpful if a teacher wants to show something specific.
 - To stop sharing your screen and go back to your video, click "Stop Presenting"



13. After you have wrapped up all agenda items, stop the recording. Wait for all other participants to sign off first. Then, hang up by clicking the red "Hang Up" icon.
14. The video recording will automatically begin rendering. Depending on the length of the video, it will likely take a good amount of time to fully render. Do not shut off your computer during this time.

15. Videos will automatically go to your “Videos” folder using the following pathway:
C:\Users\nthakore\Video\Lync Recordings, with “nthakore” being your username. They will be titled the name of the meeting – leave this naming convention as-is.



16. Once the video is complete, upload it to your Blackboard course using the following pathway:
Course → Artifacts & Office Hours → Office Hours folder → Build Content → Item. Input the following information:
- **Name:** Date: Topic (ex. May 24: Next Week’s Lessons)
 - **Text:** Link the file directly into this box. Below the file, include a short description of the topic(s) covered.

Appendix E: Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale¹ (short form)

Teacher Beliefs		How much can you do?								
<p>Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.</p>		Nothing	Very Little			Some Influence		Quite A Bit		A Great Deal
1.	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2.	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
3.	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
4.	How much can you do to help your students value learning?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
5.	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
6.	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
7.	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
8.	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
9.	How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
10.	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
11.	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
12.	How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)

Appendix F: Evaluation of Year One and year Two Secondary Teacher Virtual Roundtable and Office Hour Program Survey

Evaluation of Year One and Year Two Secondary Teacher Virtual Roundtable and Office Hour Program

Did you participate in the virtual roundtables and/or office hours during the 2017-2018 school year?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Demographic Information

1. Which subject do you teach (Drop down – English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities, World Language, etc.)
2. What course do you teach (Drop down)?
3. How many years have you taught?

☐ 0-1

☐ 2-3

☐ 4+

Virtual Roundtables

4. How many times did you attend the virtual roundtables?

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ 8

5. What rating best describes your feelings about the roundtable sessions? Scale: 1 (most negative) to 10 most positive).

Most negative (-)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Most positive (+)

Unproductive

Productive

Non-task oriented

Task oriented

Not well facilitated

Well facilitated

Incompatible group members

Compatible group members

Less than honest communicators

Honest communications

6. Rate the benefit of participating in the virtual roundtables. Scale: 1 (not much benefit) to 5 (a great deal of benefit).

To what extent have you gained...

- a. New knowledge about teaching and learning?
1 2 3 4 5
 - b. New insights about how to reach certain students?
1 2 3 4 5
 - c. New ideas about how to improve the way you teach?
1 2 3 4 5
 - d. New perspectives on your strengths and weaknesses in teaching?
1 2 3 4 5
 - e. A new outlet for expressing and sharing frustrations, concerns, problems with teaching?
1 2 3 4 5
 - f. Greater confidence in using a wider range of instructional and assessment methods?
1 2 3 4 5
 - g. A stronger sense of connection or support from other teachers?
1 2 3 4 5
 - h. A greater sense of yourself as a professional?
1 2 3 4 5
7. With regard to your selected team focus, how successful has your group been with each activity listed here? Scale: 1 (not at all successful) to 5 (extremely successful).

How successful have your virtual roundtables been with...

- a. Analyzing and discussing student needs?
1 2 3 4 5
- b. Reading research and studying successful strategies for addressing student needs, and discussing applications of what we have read/studied?
1 2 3 4 5
- c. Discussing similarities and differences in teachers' approaches and beliefs about teaching?
1 2 3 4 5
- d. Investigation programs, strategies, and materials that might help motivate students?
1 2 3 4 5
- e. Designing new materials, lessons, or assessments for students?
1 2 3 4 5
- f. Trying out new techniques, materials, approaches in teaching and
- g. assessing students?
1 2 3 4 5

- h. Sharing successful strategies you currently use?
1 2 3 4 5
- i. Assessing and sharing results of new approaches to teaching with the learning team?
1 2 3 4 5
- j. Provide specific workload management support and advice
1 2 3 4 5

Office Hours

8. How would you rate the professional relationship between you and your content team leader?

☐Excellent ☐Good ☐Adequate ☐Poor

9. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about your content team leader. *Scale: 1 (strongly disagree) or 5 (strongly agree).*

- a. I feel comfortable bringing difficult teaching problems (e.g. classroom discipline, student evaluation) to my content team leader

1 2 3 4 5

- b. My content team lead provides constructive feedback

1 2 3 4 5

- c. My content team leader is open to learning new teaching strategies

1 2 3 4 5

- d. My content team leader provides guidance on communicating with parents

1 2 3 4 5

- e. I learned about school and network policies from my content team leader

1 2 3 4 5

- f. My content team leader provides guidance in finding appropriate professional development opportunities (e.g. workshops, classes, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5

- g. My content team leader assists with connecting classroom activities to the TEKS

1 2 3 4 5

- h. My content team leader provides tips on instructional techniques

1 2 3 4 5

- i. My content team leader provides emotional support

1 2 3 4 5

- j. My content team leader prepared me for my end of year observation and evaluation

1 2 3 4 5

10. Please indicate your opinion on the following questions Scale: 1 (not at all) or 5 (a great deal)

a. To what extent has your content team leader helped you during this school year?

1 2 3 4 5

b. To what extent did your content team leader help you to improve your self-efficacy?

1 2 3 4 5

c. How much has your content team leader influenced your decision to remain in teaching?

1 2 3 4 5

Overall

11. Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements based on your experiences so far with the virtual roundtables and office hours. Scale: 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal).

I think my participation in both the virtual roundtables and office hours have...

a. Improved my overall teaching effectiveness.

1 2 3 4 5

b. Improved my skills in helping students learn.

1 2 3 4 5

c. Changed my perception about some students' learning abilities.

1 2 3 4 5

d. Increased my understanding of how to motivate students to work harder

1 2 3 4 5

e. Significantly changed how I teach.

1 2 3 4 5

f. Significantly changed how I work with other teachers.

1 2 3 4 5

g. Significantly increased my overall job satisfaction

1 2 3 4 5

12. Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements. Scale: 1 (strongly disagree) or 5 (strongly agree).

a. I am enthusiastic about my participation in virtual roundtables and office hours.

1 2 3 4 5

b. I need more time for virtual roundtable participation.

1 2 3 4 5

c. I am satisfied with my work environment here.

1 2 3 4 5

d. I am excited by students' accomplishments this year.

1 2 3 4 5

e. Teachers at Uplift get along well.

1 2 3 4 5

f. I often feel unsure of my teaching.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Will you return to your teaching assignment during the 2018-2019 school year?

☐Yes

☐No

Survey adapted from the following tools.

ICF International. (2009). Evaluation of the beginning teacher induction and mentoring (BTIM) program. Submitted to Texas Education Agency, 1-18.

Appendix G: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Virtual Roundtables

1. Did your participation in the virtual roundtables change your teaching practice? If so, how?
2. What did you find most valuable about the virtual roundtable sessions?
3. What were the advantages and challenge you experienced as a participant in the virtual roundtable?
4. How did the content team leader help the group of teachers in the virtual roundtable sessions to better manage their workload?

Virtual Office Hours

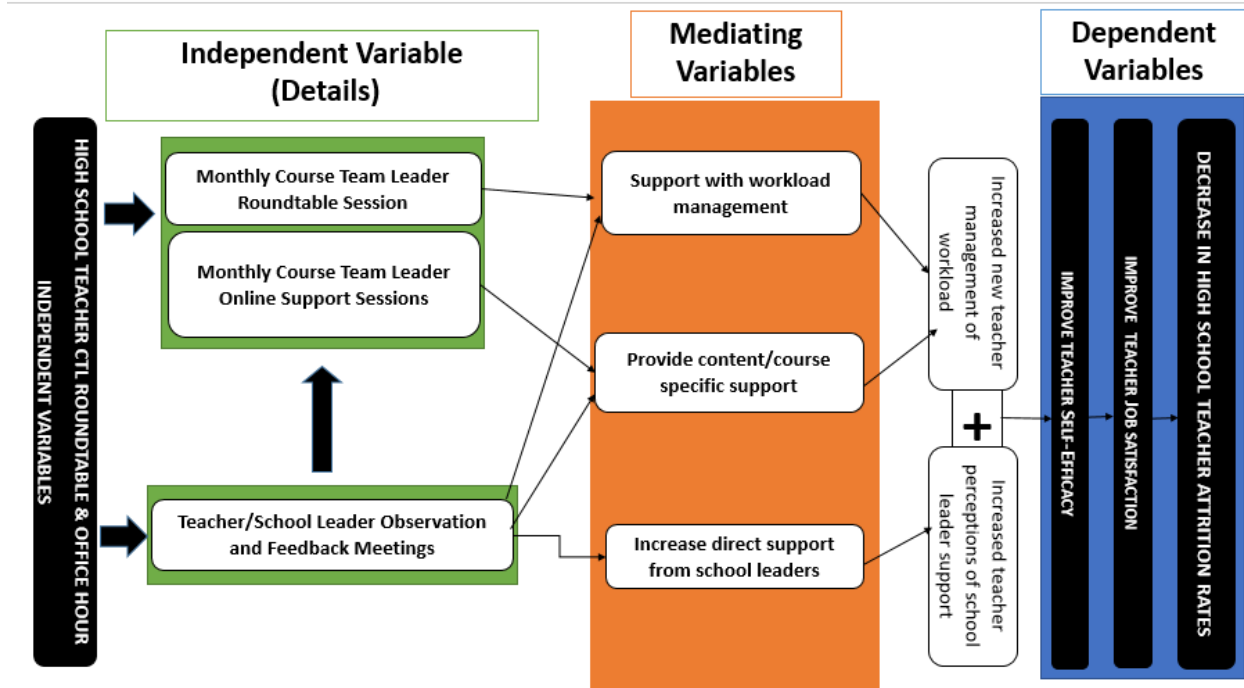
5. How often did you attend virtual office hour sessions?
6. How comfortable are you in asking your content team leader questions?
7. How satisfied have you been with your one-on-one office hour experience? Please explain your answer.
8. How do you think your teaching practices have changed as a result of your participation in virtual office hour sessions?
9. What were some of the topics that you discussed with your content team leader during the virtual office hours?
10. How has your participation in the office hours contributed to your professional growth?

Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction, and Retention Questions

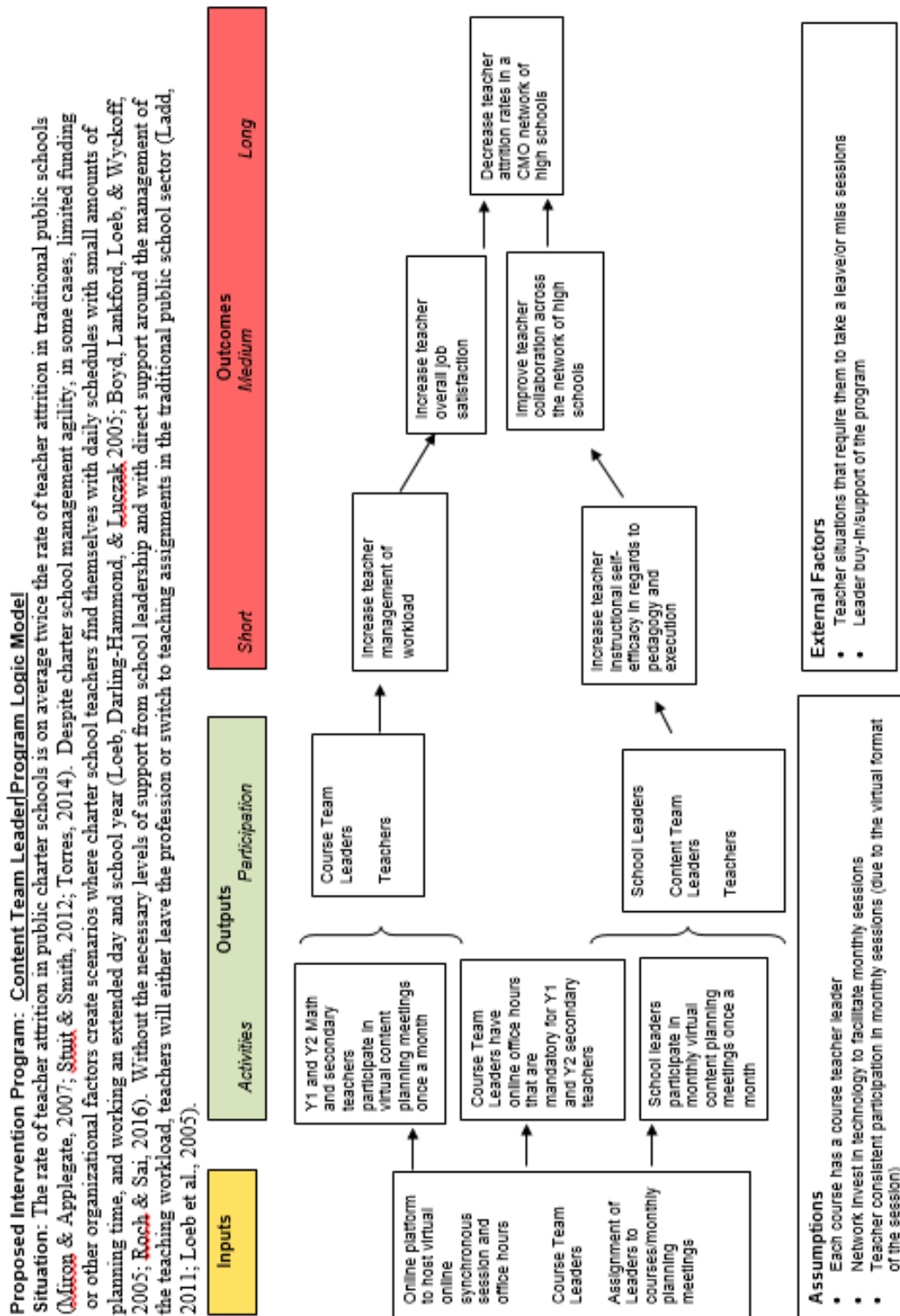
11. How has your virtual roundtable and office hour sessions affected your self-confidence about your ability to succeed as a teacher?
12. How has your virtual roundtable and office hour experience affected your belief that you enjoy your role as a teacher?
13. How has your virtual roundtable and office hour experience affected your desire to remain in your teaching role for the 2018-2019 school year?

Appendix H: Theory of Treatment

Theory of Treatment: Secondary School Virtual Teacher Roundtables and Office Hours



Appendix I: Logic Model



Appendix J: Data Summary Matrix

Data Summary Matrix

Research Question	Component	Outcome Indicator	Data Source(s)	Data Collection Tool	Frequency	Data Analysis
How does teacher self-efficacy change after participation in virtual roundtables and office hours during the 2017-2018 school year?	Virtual Roundtables	Quantitative Teacher ratings of Self-Efficacy on the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (pre/post comparison)	Quantitative Efficacy in Instructional Strategies (Questions: 5, 9, 10, 12) Efficacy in Student Engagement (Questions: 2, 3, 4, 11) Efficacy in Classroom Management (Questions: 1, 6, 7, 8)	Quantitative Teacher's Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007)	Quantitative Twice (August 2017 and April 2018)	Quantitative Simple Linear Regression
	Virtual Office Hours	Qualitative Teacher answers to interview questions regarding perceptions of self-efficacy following their participation in virtual roundtables and office hours	Qualitative Questions 10 & 11	Qualitative Interview Questions (modified from Killion, 2006)	Qualitative Once (April 2018)	Qualitative Themes from interview transcripts from related questions

What difference exist between teacher self-efficacy ratings from different teacher preparation programs (e.g. Relay, Urban Teachers, TFA, traditional teacher education) after participating in the virtual teacher roundtables and office hours during the 2017-2018 school year?	Virtual Roundtables Virtual Office Hours	Quantitative Teacher ratings of Self-Efficacy on the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (pre/post comparison)	Quantitative Efficacy in Instructional Strategies (Questions: 5, 9, 10, 12) Efficacy in Student Engagement (Questions: 2, 3, 4, 11) Efficacy in Classroom Management (Questions: 1, 6, 7, 8)	Quantitative Teacher's Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007)	Quantitative Twice (August 2017 and April 2018)	Quantitative Simple Linear Regression
What are the types of support that are provided to teachers during the virtual roundtables and office hours?	Virtual Roundtables Virtual Office Hours	Quantitative Teacher ratings of activities that took place during the virtual roundtables Qualitative Teacher answers to	Quantitative 7 (a-j) 9 (a- k) Qualitative Questions	Quantitative Virtual Roundtable and Office Hour Evaluation Participant Survey (ICF International , 2009) Qualitative Interview Questions	Quantitative (April 2018) Qualitative Once	Quantitative Descriptive Statistics Mean score ratings for each question Qualitative Themes from interview

		interview questions regarding types of support offered during the virtual roundtables and office hours	4, 9, & 10	(modified from Killion, 2006)	(April 2018)	transcripts from related questions
To what extent do year one and year two teachers attribute their ratings of self-efficacy to their participation in the virtual teacher roundtables and office hour sessions?	Office Hours	Quantitative Teacher Ratings of Self-Efficacy as a result of office hours	Quantitative Question: 12a	Quantitative Virtual Roundtable and Office Hour Evaluation Participant Survey (ICF International, 2009)	Quantitative Once (April 2018)	Quantitative Descriptive Statistics Mean score ratings for the question
		Qualitative Teacher answers to interview questions regarding their attribution of their self-efficacy to their participation in the office hour sessions	Qualitative Question 11	Qualitative Interview Questions (modified Killion, 2006)	Qualitative Once (April 2018)	Qualitative Themes from interview transcripts from related questions
To what extent do teachers report an increase in job satisfaction due to their ongoing	Virtual Roundtables Office Hours	Quantitative Teacher virtual roundtable satisfaction ratings	Quantitative Questions: 12g & 13c	Quantitative Virtual Roundtable and Office Hour Evaluation Participant Survey (ICF	Quantitative Once (April 2018)	Quantitative Descriptive Statistics Mean score ratings for the question

participation in the virtual teacher roundtables and office hours?				International , 2009)		
		Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
		Teacher answers to interview questions regarding their attribution of their self-efficacy to their participation in the office hour sessions	Question 12	Interview Questions (modified from Killion, 2006)	Once (April 2018)	Themes from interview transcripts from related questions
To what extent is participation in virtual roundtables and office hours related to changes in teacher's stated desire to return to their teaching assignment for SY 2018-2019?	Virtual Roundtables	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative
	Office Hours	Teacher intent to return	Question 14	Virtual Roundtable and Office Hour Evaluation Participant Survey (ICF International , 2009)	Once (April 2018)	Descriptive Statistics Mean score ratings for the question
		Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
			Question 13	Interview Questions (modified from Killion, 2006)	Once (April 2018)	Themes from interview transcripts from related questions

Appendix K: Codebook

Code	Meaning	Example
Challenges	Teachers share experiences that negatively influenced participation in the virtual roundtable session	"The virtual roundtables allowed people who usually don't contribute, just another way to not contribute to the conversation. It wasn't like the collaborative experience that I thought it was intended to be." (MS Eng 1)
Resource/Strategy sharing*	Teachers share whether and what types of resources/strategies were shared during the session	"Because I was able to get a very useful strategy from one of the first virtual roundtable sessions. Within the first couple of months I used it in all of my classes to try to promote reading in Spanish 2. And it really did work. It helped kids get through those texts and identify cognates..." (HS Span II)
Workload Management	Teachers share whether and what types of workload management strategies were shared during the session	"We talked a lot about how to grade constructive responses, we never really went into [workload management]...that would have been? actually really helpful..." (HS Eng 1)
Beneficial components of sessions	Teachers share what components of the sessions they found to be beneficial	"When people were happy to have the resource that I had created, that was very empowering." (MS Hum 2)
Collaboration*	Teachers share their perspectives on the collaboration that took place during the sessions	"The opportunity to talk to the other teachers during the course of the school year, and not just about common assessment, has helped me to be a bit more creative about what I'm presenting and a bit more thoughtful." (HS Span I)
Relationship building*	Teachers share their perspectives on the sessions being a platform that promoted relationship building between teachers across the network	"I got other people I can go to. And then also, if I have a question for them, I can email that one person and they'll respond back. And they will share documentation, and they're very honest about their sharing..." (HS Math 3)
Self-Efficacy	Teachers share if or how the sessions influenced their self-efficacy beliefs	"Well, it's increased [self-efficacy]. Not like not 50%, but it's definitely gone up because, number one, because of the more options, number two, because I get to talk to people who are doing what I'm doing every day..." (HS Math 1)
Job Satisfaction	Teachers share if or how the sessions influenced their job-satisfaction	"What gives me a great deal of job satisfaction is the willingness of the teachers to share." (HS Hum 1)
Intention to return	Teachers share if and how the sessions influenced their intention to return for the 2018-2019 school year	"I think it didn't change much [intention to return] because I love teaching and my colleagues before we started these virtual roundtables." (Sec Fin Arts 1)

*Emerging codes

Appendix L: Uplift Education Teacher Exit Survey Questions

Name: Last, First	Please confirm your physical mailing and/or forwarding address.	Please confirm your personal email address AND phone number.	What was your most recent position?	Length of service at Uplift Education? n?	What campus/ departme nt were you located? (most recent)	What departm ent did you work? (most recent)	Was this position a leadership role?
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Why did you decide to leave your position at this time? (check primary reason)	Are you going to work for one of the following educational institutions ?	How is it a different opportunity from what you were doing at Uplift (check primary reason)	Rate Uplift Education on each item below. Please provide a comment for items rated "fair or needs improvement."	Do you think senior management clearly communicated the components and expectations of the Uplift School Model?	Did you clearly understand and feel a part of the accomplishm ent of Uplift Education's mission and goals?	."
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How would you rate your supervisor in regard to the following? Please provide a comment for " fair or needs improvement

Appendix M: Virtual Roundtable Agenda Checklist

Office Hours/Virtual Roundtable Agenda Checklist

Subject	Your grade/content area
Date	Date of the scheduled Office Hour or Virtual Roundtable
Topic	The content or skill you will show

Meeting Topic	Notes
Introduction <i>5 minutes</i> <i>*Note: All times are approximate and will vary depending on the topic of the office hours.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On day of the office hours, join the meeting 5-10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time to welcome others as they join the call. This “pad” time is designated to allow everyone to call in and to troubleshoot technical errors as needed. Welcome everyone and remind them session will now be recorded. Sample script: <i>“Hi everyone, welcome to our office hours this afternoon! Just as a reminder before we get started, this session will be recorded and posted on Blackboard. If you’ll give me a moment, I’ll go ahead and start the recording.”</i>
Framing <i>5 minutes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the upcoming content you will be covering during this Office Hours, including where in the unit the content falls (so teachers can check themselves on pacing). Explain your rationale for selecting this content, including the connection to one or more vision components in the Course Structure. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several teachers had questions about it or requested it for an Office Hours You know from experience that this is particularly challenging content to teach well This content tends to have lots of scholar misconceptions; etc. Describe specifically what you will cover in the next 20-35 minutes. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model the strategy of ____ to teach this content/skill Model how to grade scholar work using specific rubrics
Model <i>20-35 minutes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before the Office Hours, ensure you have all your materials prepared and ready to go! This could include any/all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your lesson plan and/or deliverables Scholar work samples Texts you’ll use during the model Questions you’ll ask during the model Encourage teachers to type their questions into the chat window during the model so they don’t forget and you can come back to them during Questions/Discussion. Conduct the model in full. This should be something you can SHOW teachers for a lesson that is UPCOMING. For example:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Execution of a strategy from the Course Structure for a specific upcoming lesson ○ Teaching scholars a particular skill, such as analyzing maps/graphs/charts, close reading a text, answer OPCVL questions for a text, writing a CER paragraph, writing a thesis statement, crafting a research question, etc. • Push yourself to facilitate an actual MODEL, wherein you teach the way you would in class, so that teachers can <u>see</u> and <u>interact with</u> high-quality teaching rather than simply discussion best practices. • The following are examples of what NOT to do during the Model portion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have all teachers share one by one how they executed a certain lesson that has already passed ○ Reading out loud sections of the Course Structure for teachers ○ Describing a strategy without showing it in action
(Optional) Practice/Extension <i>15 minutes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the topic of the Office Hours, you may want to have an extension prepared if teachers do not have many questions following your model, or the practice would be especially useful for teachers. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you're modeling a skill like how to break down a passage for scholars, after your model, you might plan to have a second passage that teachers help you break down in real-time (like Guided Practice).
Questions/Discussion <i>15-30 minutes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open the Office Hours up to questions based on your model. Be sure to answer all questions related to the model and the content of the Office Hours <u>before</u> you answer questions related to other topics. • Have some discussion questions prepared in case teachers don't ask many of their own – sometimes we just don't know what we don't know until prodded!

Remy L. Washington
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Education

Johns Hopkins University Doctor of Education – Urban Education Leadership	Baltimore, Maryland	December 2018 (Expected)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dissertation: A Mixed Methods Evaluation of Virtual Teacher Collaboration To Address Teacher Attrition in Charter Schools		
Roosevelt University Master of Arts – Education Leadership and Organizational Change	Chicago, Illinois	May 2014
Concordia University Master of Arts –Secondary Education -- Mathematics	River Forest, Illinois	August 2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Golden Apple Teacher Education Program (GATE)		
Northwestern University Bachelor of Arts – Major Neuroscience and Minor Mathematics	Evanston, Illinois	June 2001
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Research Publication: In Vivo Indomethacin Treatment Causes Microglial Cell Activation in Adult Mice (Neurochemical Research, 2010)		

Summary of Qualification

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- Highly-skilled at developing systems of evaluation that includes the collection and synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data to improve student outcomes along with school and network practices
 - Skilled at conducting quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research to evaluate and improve network and leader practice
 - Effective at facilitating a strategic planning process and developing short and long-term strategic plans
 - Trained in the secondary International Baccalaureate programs of study (Middle Years Program and Diploma Program)
 - Able to create and manage multi-year projects that require the collaboration of multiple stakeholders across campuses and departments
 - Experienced and well-regarded professional development facilitator for leaders and teachers
 - Collects, disaggregates, and uses sophisticated data analysis techniques when examining student assessment data and shares with relevant stakeholders

Certification *(State of Illinois)*

Type 09	Secondary	6 -12	Endorsements: Mathematics & Psychology	July 2005
Type 75	Administrative	K – 12	Roosevelt University	December 2010

Experience

Uplift Education	Dallas, Texas	June 2013 – present
Managing Director		June 2015 -
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported, monitored, and ensured campus leaders prioritize scholar outcomes on the ACT and in collaboration with my peer high school managing director and the high school leaders saw the network’s highest ACT composite average of 22.5 for the Class of 2016 Created the network’s virtual teacher collaboration structure in collaboration with the Secondary Director of Curriculum and Curriculum Coordinators to ensure that over 400 secondary teachers across the network receive support from their peers with curricular design and instructional practice development Managed and developed five to six school directors per year for over a four year period and I have retained 88% of the school directors Sought out best practices from other high performing charter school network peers, in-network high school leaders, and leveraged the support of the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Academic Officer to develop dean and director meeting structures that include opportunities for collaboration and monitoring of key metrics to ensure that campuses are driving for the end of year assessment results Collaborated with Dr. David Conley, campus leaders, and members of the Teaching and Learning Team to develop a set of guiding principles and a three-year strategic plan aligned to the International Baccalaureate Standards and Practices to ensure that leader practices are in alignment with the expectations of the Middle Years and the Diploma Programs Developed the approach and facilitated a group of campus leaders, teachers, parents and solicited input from members of the Uplift Education Board of Directors to create the network’s secondary school grading policy Created the network strategy and Approaches to Learning Implementation Guide in collaboration with the ATL Working Group co-chairs to ensure that K-12 teachers are vertically aligning and explicitly teaching ATL skills 		
School Director		June 2013 – June 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved 11th Grade ACT score by an average of 3.6 points from fall to spring assessment administration for SY 2013-2014 Created and implemented a campus-based strategic plan grounded in the three priorities: improving scholar college readiness, improving conditions for team success, and providing consistent coaching and feedback which yielded in an increase in 15% more scholars passing the STAAR EOC English I assessment (from SY 13/14-SY14/15), improved 9th-11th grade EPAS average 		

composite scores by almost 2.0 points (from SY13/14 – SY14/15) and improved teacher retention to over 85% in SY 14/15

- Collaborated with network's Teaching and Learning Team to develop resources to improve teacher efficacy and student outcomes on college admissions assessments (e.g., assessment information PowerPoints presentation, benchmark assessments)
- Conducted weekly professional development sessions that included instructional consultancies, formative assessment support, data analysis, and EPAS assessments

Morgan Park High School

Chicago, Illinois

September 2005 – June 2013

Assistant Principal

January 2011 – June 2013

- Increased the number of students in grade 11 meeting and exceeding state standards by 18.2% in reading on the April 2013 PSAT by instituting a school-wide literacy strategic plan
- Facilitated 75% of the course team's performance management sessions and professional development sessions during SY 2010-2011 to discuss targeted skill acquisition
- Worked with attendance team to develop attendance policies associated with decreasing the number of tardies to first period classes – saw a 47% decrease in tardies to first period classes in a 3 month period
- Conducted over 200 formal clinical observations using the CPS Teaching for Learning Framework (included a pre-observation planning meeting, observation, and post-observation debrief cycle)
- Coordinated both the Credit Recovery Summer Session and the Freshmen Connection Program (Summer 2010 & Summer 2011) which enrolls over 350 students annually

Mathematics & Science Curriculum Coordinator

September 2009 – January 2011

- Increased student EPAS test scores by 35% for students in grades 9-11 in mathematics and science through the planning, implementation and evaluation of 5-week interim assessments
- Increased the number of students meeting and exceeding state standards by 2.5% in mathematics and 12.6% in science on the April 2009 PSAT by collaborating with teacher course teams
- Coordinated and facilitated after school skill based tutorials for 225 students in Geometry and Algebra II
- Created and implemented student class performance-monitoring tool to aid in the introduction of the district's performance management initiative to improve collaboration and data driven decision making among a staff of 85

Mathematics Department Chair

January 2007 – August 2010

- Planned, monitored, and evaluated the school's mathematics peer-tutoring program that serviced over 135 students per quarter
- Increased the number of students enrolling in Advanced Placement mathematics courses from 35 to 121
- Conducted a variety of professional development sessions that discussed the following topics: unwrapping state standards, discovery learning, summarizing, and data driven instruction

Mathematics Instructor
2009

September 2005 – August

- Taught Mathematical Studies and Mathematics SL/HL and 96% of students achieved a score of 4 or better on their end of year diploma program assessment

- Taught Advanced Placement Calculus and saw a 35% increase in the number of students receiving a 3 or better
- Taught 7th grade Pre-Algebra for two years and maintained a rate of 100% of the students meeting and or exceeding state standards in Mathematics

International Baccalaureate Diploma and Middle Years Program

September 2005 - June 2010

- Assumed the role of the Creativity Action Service Coordinator for students enrolled in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program for 4 years
- Assumed the role of the Personal Project Coordinator for the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program for 3 years

Olive Harvey College

Chicago, Illinois

March 2006 – December 2008

TRiO Program Master Mathematics Tutor

- Created and facilitated a series of workshops aimed at improving student study, test taking, and note-taking skills
- Increased the number of students participating in TriO Workshops by 50%
- Trained fifty peer tutors and taught them how to support students with diverse learning styles over a series of workshops offered throughout the year

Hirsch Metropolitan High School

Chicago, Illinois

August 2004 – September 2005

Mathematics Instructor & AVID Mathematics Lead Teacher

- Increased the number of students participating on the school's mathematics competition team by 40%
- Coordinated the efforts of the mathematics department to begin skill performance tracking in 80% of our mathematics courses